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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310**



IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (30 Jul 68) FOR OT RD 682301

19 August 1968

**SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 173d
Airborne Brigade, Period Ending 30 April 1968 (U)**

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Kenneth G. Wickham
KENNETH G. WICKHAM
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~~DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY~~
~~AFD 8-2 Francisco 96050~~

⑨ Operational report for period ending 30 Apr 68.
AVBE-SC/MHD the quarterly 15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned
(1 February - 30 April 1968)

⑪ 15 May 68

THRU: Commanding General
I FFORCEV
ATTN: AVFA-GC-OT
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TO: Assistant Chief of Staff
For Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington, D.C., 20310

Operational Report Lessons Learned is forwarded in compliance with
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FOR THE COMMANDER:

Michael Scafati
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5
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AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
I. <u>Significant Organizational and Unit Activities</u>	
1. Introduction	1
2. Organization	2
3. Intelligence	3
4. Combat Operations	22
5. Training	36
6. Psychological Operations and Civic Action	37
7. Logistics	37
8. Personnel Administration	38
9. Chemical Operations	43
II. <u>Commander's Observations - Lessons Learned</u>	
III. <u>Inclusions</u>	
1. Roster of Key Personnel	
2. Brigade Organization Chart	
3. Supply and Combat Services Activities	
4. 3d Bn 503d Inf CAAR + OPN Walker 17 Jan - 27 Feb 68	
5. Combat After Action Interview "The Battle of Tuy Hoa North"	

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CONFIDENTIAL

7
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

I. Significant Organizational and Unit Activities

1. Introduction

This Operational Report Lessons Learned covers the period 1 February 1968 through 31 April 1968. The 173d Airborne Brigade has continued to conduct operations aimed at locating and destroying Viet Cong, North Vietnamese Forces and installations. The Brigade, as I Field Force's reserve remained ready to meet any mission required and continued operations in the Brigade's TAOR (Tactical Area of Responsibility). The Brigade's Civic Action Program continued to play a key role in the Brigade's counterinsurgency efforts.

To best accomplish its mission, the 173d Airborne Brigade conducted four major operations during the reported period. Operation Bolling, which commenced 17 September 1967 continues to be conducted in Phu Yen Province by the 4th Battalion, 503d Infantry and D Company 16th Armor through the months of February, March and April to present. The Brigade minus continued to operate in the central highlands as a two battalion task force with augmented actions while participating in Operation MACARTHUR under the Operational Control of the 4th Infantry Division until April when they redeployed on Operation COCHISE and commenced a three Battalion operation in the Bong Son plains area. Operation WALKER, which includes the defense of Camp Radcliff at An Khe and the surrounding AC continued to involve one airborne battalion.

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1

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AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

2. Organization

During the past quarter the major organizational change in the Brigade was the reorganization of the Brigade's Infantry Battalions under TOE/MTOE 7-175T.

USARPAC GO 122, 15 February 1968 authorized activation and organization of the 173d Airborne Brigade's Infantry Battalions under TOE/MTOE 7-175T. The date for re-organization actions was left to the discretion of commanders concerned based upon the availability of personnel and equipment resources.

The re-organization of the infantry battalions was accomplished in two phases; Phase I commenced on 2 April 1968.

1. Phase I: Company D (Provisional) in each infantry battalion was inactivated by a Brigade General Order on 2 April 1968 and Company D established under TOE/MTOE 7-175T. All personnel assigned to Company D (Provisional) were re-assigned to Company D from Headquarters Company by proper morning report entries. Subsequently, property and equipment accountability were transferred from Headquarters Company to Company D and requisitions were submitted for equipment shortages. As replacements became available, the Adjutant General assigned personnel to each respective company until authorized strength levels were reached.

2. Phase II: This phase consists of the organization of Company E in each of the infantry battalions. Company E will be activated on 1 May 1968 in each infantry battalion and the cadre for the company headquarters will be assigned. On 15 May the Heavy Mortar Platoon will be transferred from Headquarters Company to Company E. The cadre for the reconnaissance platoon will be constituted on 1 June 1968; thereafter, replacements will be assigned to the platoons as they become available. It is estimated that Phase II of the re-organization will be completed by 1 August 1968.

Also during the first month of the reporting period, February, the 172d Military Intelligence Detachment, 24th Military History Detachment, 51st Chemical Detachment were all changed from attached to assigned to the 173d Airborne Brigade. In addition the 54th Infantry Detachment (Ground Surveillance Radar) was attached to the 173d Support Battalion (Airborne) for deployment at Camp Radcliff, An Khe.

When the Brigade moved to Bong Son the 1st Battalion 50th Mechanized Infantry under the command of LTC Cheney L. Bertholf Jr. was attached to the Brigade greatly enhancing its firepower and mobility. The 1st Battalion 50th Mechanized Infantry is equipped with M113 Armored Personnel Carriers.

CONFIDENTIAL

AVR-90/MED

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

3. Intelligence:

a. The enemy situations before and during each operation conducted by the Brigade during this period are broken down as follows: Operation MACARTHUR to its termination, Operation COCHISE, Operation BOLLING and Operation WALKER.

(1) Operation MACARTHUR:

(a) Enemy Situation Prior to the Operation: Prior to the beginning of February the VC/NVA launched a country wide offensive during the Vietnamese New Year (TET) 30-31 January 1968. The outburst of enemy activity caused Task Force Powerhouse to be split and the 1st Bn-503d Inf detached and sent to Ban Me Thout while the reduced task force moved to Suoi Do.

1. Suoi Do: The 2nd Bn-503d Inf moved into Suoi Do with the mission of stopping the 5th Bn-95th B Regiment from interdicting Highway 19 East from Pleiku to An Khe. The 5th Bn-95th B Regiment was located around VC Valley (vic BR 2020) and was sending out elements to mine the highway. Elements of the 407th Sapper Battalion were located on the Pleiku, Binh Dinh border with the possible mission of interdiction between An Khe and Pleiku. The 2d Bn 503d Inf made only light contact with the 5th Bn 95th B Regiment between Suoi Do and An Khe. After a short period the 2d Bn 503d Inf moved to reinforce the 1st Bn in Ban Me Thout.

During the Task Force's stay in Suoi Do, they were also prepared to move to Pleiku City if it was attacked again. Intelligence in early February placed the 408th Sapper Bn northeast of Pleiku with the mission of conducting sapper actions against Camp Hollaway and Pleiku City. Small elements of the 415th Local Force Bn were located southwest of Pleiku City and the 4th Bn 95th B Regiment and the 95th B Regiment's Headquarters were located south of the City. Elements of the 40th Artillery Regiment, 32nd NVA Regiment and 174th Regiment were also identified in the area.

2. Ban Me Thout: Initial intelligence in early February indicated the 33d NVA Regiment was on the run from Ban Me Thout and was making a gradual withdrawal to base area 740 located in Cambodia. Elements of the 40th Artillery were in the area to conduct rocketing and mortar attacks against friendly installations. The 40th Artillery Regiment was located in the Tri Border Area and had elements split three ways; two elements were in Kontum Province, one was in Pleiku Province and one was in the Ban Me Thout area. The 1016 Battalion was acting as the security element of the 40th Artillery Regiment (the only Regiment in the area capable of 122mm rocket attacks). There was also a 301st Local Force Battalion located due south of Ban Me Thout and the 401 Local Force Battalion located due north of Ban Me Thout.

The 33d Regiment suffered 25 to 30% casualties during its TET Offensive and all indications were that it was withdrawing towards base area 740 in Cambodia. The 1st Bn 503d Inf was sent to pursue them while US Special Forces set up blocking positions near the Cambodian Border to cut off the 33d Regiment's retreat. However, LTC Ma Ban Mink, the 33d Regiment's CO, left his rear elements as a blocking force and with the remainder of his regiment moved north 40-50 kilometers and escaped the allied trap.

3. Kontum: With the escape of the 33d Regiment, the 1st and 2nd Battalion 503d Inf were directed to Kontum to face the threat of increased enemy activity in that area. Intelligence reported the following units within the Kontum area (during March) or close enough to have an influence on the area of operations:

- a. 4th Bn/24th Regiment
- b. 5th Bn/24th NVA Regiment
- c. 6th Bn/24th NVA Regiment
- d. Elements of 40th Artillery Regiment
- e. Elements of 32d NVA Regiment

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AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

- f. 66th NVA Regiment
- g. 2d Bn/17th NVA Regiment
- h. 304th Local Force Battalion
- i. 407th Sapper Battalion
- j. B-3 Front Forward TAC CP

(b) Peculiarities and Weaknesses:

1. The CO of the 33d NVA Regiment is known to be an evasive specialist, he prefers to avoid contact and his unit is known to usually withdraw to base areas to regroup and resupply before resuming the offensive.
2. The enemy units in this area can now be resupplied with both men and equipment within 30 days. Trucks have been reported moving in the area along the Cambodia border for the past two months. A POW captured near FSB 14, 19 miles west of Kontum, stated that he was transported by truck convoy from North Vietnam to a location one day's walk from Kontum Province. The trip lasted eleven days.

(c) Enemy Capabilities:

1. Attack the Kontum complex with 3 NVA Regiments supported by indirect fire from the 40th NVA Artillery Regiment.
2. Defend in battalion strength when contacted by US troops. It was doubtful that he was capable of massing a regimental size defense due to US Air and artillery.
3. Withdraw from the area at the time and place of his choosing.
4. Reinforce the battlefield with the 2 Battalions of the 174th NVA Regiment and the 304 Local Force Battalion located on Highway 14 between Pleiku and Kontum City.

(d) Summary of Operations: During 1-7 February 1968 as Task Force Powerhouse, 1st Battalion 503d Infantry, 2d Battalion 503d Infantry, A Btry and B Btry 3d Battalion 319th Artillery participated in Operation MACARTHUR. On 28 February 1968, the 2d Bn 503d Inf and the 3d Bn 503d Inf exchanged locations: 2d Bn 503d Inf going to AO WALKER and the 3d Bn 503d Inf going to AO MACARTHUR. During February, while engaged in Operation MACARTHUR, Brigade units were involved in 48 incidents, 20 of which were friendly initiated. The 1st Bn 503d Inf was OPCON to the 4th Inf Division for the period 2-15 February 1968 and during this period the Battalion was involved in 46 incidents, 19 of which were friendly initiated.

(e) Significant Contacts:

1. 071200 Feb 68: AR 985465 D/2/503 made contact with 5 NVA. Results: 1 NVA KIA (BC).
2. 161305 Feb 68: ZU 233837 C/2/503 made contact with an estimated VC squad. Results: 2 VC KIA, 3 VC PW's.
3. 271535 Feb 68: ZA 202741 E/1/503 made contact with an estimated NVA Company. Results: 4 NVA KIA (BC).
4. 03 Feb 68: AP 803975 C/1/503 contact with unknown size element, initially engaged from the West, and Northwest, developed to the South and Southwest. SA, AW and mortar fire, RPG-4 received, also one 12.7 HMG observed firing

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15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

from vic AP 031618. Indication show estimated reinforced company by sector, covered, type weapons, and volume of fire, snipers in trees. Aircraft on resupply and dustoff drew heavy fire. Results: 4 US WHA, 13 NVA KIA (BC), enemy initiated.

5. 05 Feb 68: AP 803795 C/D/1/503 received 70 rounds 60mm and 82mm mortar fire from a 2300 ml AZ, enemy initiated. Results: 10 US WHA.

6. 10 Feb 68: AP 754885 D/1/503 received SA and mortar fire from an estimated Co size element, contact broken to the SW. Results: 1 US KHA, 6 US WHA, 12 NVA KIA (BC), enemy initiated contact broken late in the afternoon.

7. 12 Feb 68: ZU 248854 A/1/503 contact initiated with squad of NVA proceeded SW to hill vic ZU 247853 where estimated reinforced Co in dug in positions along top of hill utilizing mortars and rockets. Action continued until 1810 hours. Results: 8 US KHA, 20 US WHA, negative enemy results, enemy initiated.

8. 14 Feb 68: ZU 258936 C/1/503 fire support base camp attacked by ground, mortars, rockets, rifle grenades, SA and AW from SE, E and NE between 0051 and 0330 hours. First ground attack came supported by 60mm and 82mm mortars and rifle grenades, 60 placed inside wire perimeter, B-40 rocket launcher along flank. NVA troops crawled thru the wire and placed satchel cahrges around the area (neg damage). Mortars fired from an AZ of 40 and 125 at approximately 300 meters. Fighting continued until 0118 hours, then other small arms and AW fire contact broken at approximately 0330 hours. Estimated received 10 rounds B-40 rocket, 60 rounds mortar (60mm and 82mm). Counter-mortar, artillery, gunships and Spooky employed. Results: 15 NVA KIA (BC), 1 US KHA, 7 US WHA (5 evacuated). NVA believed to be 3d Co, 101st Bn, 33d Regt by document readout. US initiated.

9. 031522 Mar 68: AR 852979 D/1/503 made contact with an estimated Co size enemy force. Results: 6 US KHA, 11 US WHA, enemy casualties undetermined.

10. 031530 Mar 68: AR 854976 C/1/503 received AW and SA fire. Results: 1 US KHA, 5 US WHA, 2 US MHA, enemy casualties undetermined.

11. 031532 Mar 68: ZA 135767 C/3/503 made contact with an estimated reinforced NVA platoon. Results: 3 US KHA, 8 US WHA; 4 NVA KIA (BC).

12. 041200 Mar 68: AR 852978 C/1/503 found 2 US MHA, status changed to KHA.

13. 041430 Mar 68: ZA 127762 B/3/503 found 3 NVA KIA, killed by A/S or Artillery. Results: 3 NVA KIA (BC).

14. 060935 Mar 68: ZA 212730 Southbound convoy ambushed by an estimated NVA Co, employing AW, B-40, and mortar fire. E-17th Cav moved to assist, employed A/S and Artillery. Results: 2 US KHA, 6 US MHA; 4 NVA KIA (BC), 2 NVA PW (WIA).

15. 071100 Mar 68: ZA 210715 E-17th Cav made contact with an unknown size enemy force in bunkers. Firing continued until 1555H. Results: 14 NVA KIA (BC).

16. 080955 Mar 68: AR 845996 C/1/503 engaged 5 NVA fled NW. C/1/503 pursued and engaged an estimated NVA Co vic AR 843997. A/S and Artillery were employed. Contact was broken at 1600H. Results: 4 NVA KIA (BC), 7 NVA KIA (Poss).

17. 141015 Mar 68: ZA 147943 D/3/503 made contact with an estimated Co size enemy force. At 141435, B/3/503 linked up with D/3/503. Contact was broken at 141600. Results: 1 US KHA, 7 US WHA; 5 NVA KIA (BC).

18. 151450 Mar 68: ZA 048982 C/1/503 received sniper fire in

5

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

12
15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

the area of an earlier contact. Contact was broken at 1715H. Results: 1 US KHA, 1 US WHA; 8 NVA KIA (BC), 8 NVA KIA (Poss).

19. 161025 Mar 68: ZA 045985 C/1/503 made contact with a squad force. Contact broken at 1240H. Results: 5 NVA KIA (BC).

20. 160245 Mar 68: ZA 149940 D/3/503 received 11 rounds 120mm mortar fire. Results: 2 US KHA, 5 US WHA.

21. 170800 Mar 68: ZA 038992 B/1/503 found 4 NVA KIA killed as a result of probing actions on the perimeter on 16 March. Results: 4 NVA KIA (BC).

22. 170845 Mar 68: ZA 041988 B/1/503 searched a tunnel complex which had been hit by airstrikes. Results: 35 NVA KIA (BC).

23. 181548 Mar 68: ZB 034010 D/1/503 received mortar fire of unknown caliber, SA, AW, rifle grenades and sniper fire from an estimated company size force. Contact was broken 1742H. Results: 1 US KHA, 2 US WHA, 8 US MHA (Later found 7 US KHA, 1 US recovered unhurt).

24. 190405 Mar 68: ZA 154955 B & D/3/503 received ground attack by unknown size enemy force. Contact continued in the area until 191600. Results: 16 US WHA; 1 NVA KIA (BC), 8 NVA KIA (Poss).

25. 211315 Mar 68: ZA 153956 A/3/503 made contact with an enemy ambush site. C/3/503 linked up with A/3/503 at the ambush site, received SA, AW, B-40, M-79, and mortar fire. Results: 2 US KHA, 23 US WHA; 1 NVA KIA (BC), 4 NVA KIA (Poss).

26. 221618 Mar 68: ZA 151959 C/3/503 received heavy B-40 and AW fire from estimated NVA Bn. Results: 3 US KHA, 5 US WHA; 3 NVA KIA (BC), 19 NVA KIA (Poss).

27. 231800 Mar 68: ZA 155962 C/3/503 engaged NVA in trees and bunkers. Results: 4 NVA KIA (BC).

28. 241500 Mar 68: ZA 151960 A & C/3/503 received heavy AW and SA fire from the W. Artillery and A/S were employed and contact was broken at 1730H. Results: 1 US KHA, 10 US WHA, 5 US MHA (Later found 5 US KHA); 8 NVA KIA (BC).

29. 261450 Mar 68: ZA 151992 A/1/503 received heavy AK-47 fire from the SW and from an estimated 10 snipers. Fire continued until 1555H. Results: 1 US KHA, 2 US WHA; 4 NVA KIA (BC).

(f) Terrain and Weather:

1. Terrain: The area in this analysis is within the central portion of the Annamite Mountain chain which includes the northwest portion of Pleiku Province and the southwest portion of Kontum Province. Rugged, steep sloped mountains prevail throughout the area. Wide plains are abundant between these mountains. Vegetation consists mainly of multi-canopied forest with dense undergrowth. The drainage within the area is handled by the Sau River system which also provides a good potential avenues of movement.

Rugged mountains are found mainly in the northeast and northwest corners of the area. These mountains are steeply (over 30%) sloped and severely dissected by numerous gullies. Average elevations are 870 meters in the northwest to 880 meters in the northeast. The highest elevation is 1,775 meters on Chu Mon Ray at YA 956998. Local relief in these mountain regions varies between 300 and 500 meters.

Hills are mainly found surrounding the west central mountains and along the eastern border of Pleiku, Kontum Province. Average elevation within these hills regions

CONFIDENTIAL

15
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

is approximately 450 meters. The local relief in this foothills varies between 100 and 300 meters. The highest elevation is 671 meters at YA 507512.

There are several large rolling to undulating plains generally found between the rugged mountains. The largest plains are considered to be part of the Kontum Plateau. This particular plateau extends approximately 20 kilometers north of Kontum and covers all of Pleiku Province. Elevations in this plain vary between 400 and 800 meters with 600 meters being common. Slopes in this plains area, are generally less than 10% but scattered hills or low mountains slopes may be much steeper. This plain is widest in the southeast portion where it is 44 kilometers across; narrowest above Kontum.

Multi-canopied dense undergrowth forests are the predominant type of vegetation. Single layer discontinuous canopy forests are found interspread amongst the dense undergrowth forests.

Brushwood can be found interspersed amongst both the multi-canopied dense undergrowth forests and the single layer discontinuous canopy forests.

Clear or sparsely vegetated areas are randomly distributed throughout, but appear mostly in the rolling to undulating plains in the southeast. These areas are found in greatest abundance in the vicinity of ZA 1756, ZA 2058, AR 8365, AR 8274 and AR 9379.

Plantations are found mainly in the southeast corner and west of Kontum (ZA 2289). Bamboo is present throughout the area, but is only depicted on the map in the vicinity of YA 9077.

Rice cultivation is found mainly in the eastern half of the area in low lying river valleys. However rice may be found in some valleys in the western half also. Rice paddies exist in abundance in the vicinity of AR 8058, AR 8160, surrounding the city of Kontum (AR 7888) and in numerous smaller valleys.

2. Weather: The climate is monsoonal in nature with two major seasons; the southwest monsoon from mid-May to late September and northeast monsoon from early November to mid-March. These two major seasons are separated by two transitional periods; the spring transition, mid-March to mid-May, and autumn transition, late September to early November. A monsoon is a seasonal prevailing wind.

The warm season occurs from March through May. High humidity months are May through October. The cool season is November and December. Low humidity months are January through March. From March through May, increased temperatures will reduce personnel capabilities. All air operations especially heliborne will be more restricted in payloads or performance than in cooler weather. High humidity from May through October will cause increased rotting or mildewing of rubber, leather, cloth or rope.

(g) Enemy's Order of Battle:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED STRENGTH</u>	<u>LAST CONFIRMED LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>
33d NVA Regt	750	Southwest Ban Me Thout	Feb 68
95th B Regt	1350	Southwest Kontum	Mar 68
407th Sapper Bn	500	Pleiku Province	Mar 68
E-301 Bn	300	South of Ban Me Thout	Feb 68
24th NVA Regt	850	ZA 0797	Mar 68
4th Bn 24th NVA Regt	Unk	Unk	Unk

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

5th Bn 24th NVA Regt	Unk	AR 878980	Mar 68
6th Bn 24th NVA Regt	Unk	Unk (Kontum Province)	Mar 68
32d Regt	1050	Dak To Area	Mar 68
66th Regt	1700	Dak To (Withdraw Mar to Tri Border area)	
2d Bn 174th Regt	Unk	ZA 1580	Mar 68
40th Arty Regt (Elements, possibly 200th Bn)	Unk	ZA 0595	Mar 68
304th LF Bn	160	ZA 1896	Mar 68
407th Sapper Bn	250	East of Kontum City	Mar 68

(2) Operation COCHISE:

(a) Enemy Situation:

1. Disposition: The 173d Airborne Brigade relieved the 3d Brigade 4th Infantry Division and assumed operations in AO Cochise on 30 March 1968. Since the end of January 1968, the Bong Son area of operations has been the site of increased enemy activity. The enemy does not fully control the area around Bong Son because of the presence of friendly troops and efforts of the government's revolutionary development program. Intelligence has reported the following units within the Bong Son area or close enough to have influence upon the COCHISE area of operations.

- g. HQ & support units NTJ NVA Division
- h. 18th NVA Regiment
- i. 22d VC Regiment
- j. 2nd VC Regiment
- k. 98th NVA Engineer Bn
- l. 200th NVA AD Bn
- m. 300th NVA Artillery Bn
- n. 551st NVA Signal Bn
- o. 500th NVA Transportation Bn
- p. 600th NVA Medical Bn
- q. 300th NVA Sapper Bn
- r. 36th VC Sapper Bn (LF)
- s. 50th VC Infantry Bn (LF)
- t. E 210th VC Infantry Bn (LF)
- u. 407th Sapper Bn

2. Peculiarities and Weaknesses:

- a. The enemy is vulnerable to sustained friendly operations.

15

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBF-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

- b. The enemy is vulnerable to air and artillery retaliation as well as being observed by air.
- c. The enemy is prone to hunger and illness living in the jungle.
- d. Psychological warfare will no doubt have some effect on the enemy.

3. Enemy Capabilities:

- a. The enemy has carried out increasing small scale attacks gaining a certain degree of success, allowing him to cause friendly casualties at a minimum risk to his forces. He can be expected to continue these operations.
- b. The enemy can be expected to continue his interdiction of lines of communication, mining of routes of communications, and sabotage operations against pipelines and attacks against isolated outposts.
- c. The movement of a large number of aircraft into an area would offer a lucrative target for an enemy mortar attack, and he could be expected to use this opportunity to employ his mortars and recoilless rifles since this type of attack would involve the least amount of risk to his forces.
- d. The location of the 7th and 8th Bn 22d Regt and 93d and 97th Bn 2nd VC Regiment indicate the probability of a battalion size attack on Phu My District Headquarters and ARVN installations.
- e. With recent reports of a buildup of a battalion size force to the south of An Khe, the enemy will in all probability launch a full scale attack upon isolated outposts around An Khe or possible Camp Radcliff/An Khe itself in the near future.
- f. Tuy An and Haiu Xuong remain as likely targets for company and battalion size attacks.
- g. Rice gathering units can be expected to enter Phu Tuy, Phu Cat and Tuy Hoa Districts to collect taxes from the people after harvest.
- h. Propaganda lectures, drafting and kidnapping of civilians and laborers, continued infiltration and harrasing activity is expected to continue within Binh Dinh.
- i. Possible major attack on Qui Nhon by a multi-battalion size force.
- j. Combat Efficiency (Binh Dinh Province, AO Walker and Cochise): In Binh Dinh Province, the 18th NVA Regt was primarily concerned with operations in southeastern Phu Cat District. The 2d VC Regt is continuing operations in the upper Phu My Valley with elements of the 22th NVA Regt. Primary interest still appears to be directed against GVN secured areas in the Phu Cat and Phu My Valley area. Due to information gathered from recent PW's, it is believed that replacements are coming into Binh Dinh Province along with supplies. Enemy units have remained out of major contacts with allied units for some time. It is felt that enemy units within Binh Dinh Province will wait until they are up to strength and have the equipment and supplies before committing themselves to a large scale attack.

(b) Significant Contacts:

- 1. 051145 Apr 68: BR 963901 C/2/503 found a small VC hospital. 6 NVA/VC POW's were captured in the area.
- 2. 171245 Apr 68: BR 683820 LFP Team B observed 8 VC moving

9

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

16

AVBE- SC/PHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

NW. Artillery was adjusted into the area resulting in 6 VC KIA (Poss).

3. 181750 Apr 68: BS 958001 B/1/50 made contact with an unknown size enemy force during a village search. Results: 3 NVA KIA (BC).

4. 231835 Apr 68: BR 834580 LRP Team C observed 10 VC moving west, carrying rucksacks. Artillery was fired in the area resulting in 10 VC KIA (Poss).

5. 261325 Apr 68: BR 745757 A/3/503 engaged 10-12 NVA with SA and AW fire. Results: 3 NVA KIA (BC).

6. 281210 Apr 68: BR 743745 A/3/503 engaged 10-20 NVA with SA and AW fire. Results: 5 NVA KIA (BC).

(c) Terrain and Weather:

1. Terrain:

a. Existing Situation: In the northern part of Binh Dinh Province the principal urban area is Bong Son (BR 8796). In the flat seasonally inundated coastal plains, there are three low mountain spurs with numerous adjacent hills and hill locks. The lowland plains grade westward into rolling plains, foothills, and then into steep heavily dissected mountains. The terrain becomes increasingly rugged from east to west. The predominant vegetation is rice cultivation in the low lands and light to dense undergrowth in the hills and mountains. There are numerous valleys which facilitate movement; however, all expedient movement is restricted to existing trains, roads, and waterways.

The principal avenues of movement are in a north-south direction. The coastal lowlands area is a preferred avenue of movement to rugged western mountains. In the south avenues of movement are broad with numerous alternate routes, but to the north they become constricted and the alternate route become limited. Expedient movement in the coastal lowlands in a north-south direction would be to the east of and parallel to Route 1. Concealed movement would probably be north along the Suoi Ca River Valley (BR 802654) to the Nuoc Lang River (BR 701875) Valley and then along the Kim Son River Valley (BR 818899). The An Hai River Valley (BR 768669) is a major avenue of movement from the north to either the south via the Kim Son River Valley (BR 818899) or to the east along the Lai Giang River Valley (BR 862942). The Kim Son River Valley (BR 818899) affords many good avenues of movement from east to west through the Nuoc Tuong (BR 701875), Suoi Tim (BR 684829) and S Lon (BR 773838) River Valleys. Accompanying trails allows movement further west to the Suoi Kon River Valley (BR 593831) in the extreme west. The Son River Valley (BR 587662) is the only major north-south avenue of movement in the west.

b. The steep slopes encountered in these rugged areas are obstacles to movement. Swollen rivers and streams also present an obstacle to movement in these areas. Avenues of movement in the coastal plains are unrestricted in all directions; however, flooding in the wet season will present some problems to movement. The numerous streams and canals in this area will also present an obstacle to movement.

2. Weather:

a. Existing situation: From mid-March to mid-May, the Spring Transition period begins. The gradual shifting of the winds from a north-easterly to a southwest direction causes conditions to improve. Weather is generally good except for frequent occurrences of morning fog. Visibilities will be reduced until approximately 0900 hours. By the end of May the Southwest Monsoon again begins to dominate the province.

b. Effects on enemy courses of action: During the Spring Transition period the cloud ceiling lifts, allowing aerial reconnaissance and

1.

CONFIDENTIAL

17

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

surveillance, but during those periods when clouds, fog and occasional light rain exists most of the hill masses will be hidden and valleys will be difficult to observe. Foot movement will be good to excellent during this period enabling the enemy to move faster, enhancing his ability to attack and withdraw to cover and concealment virtually undetected.

g. Effects on friendly courses of action: The Spring Transition period enhances friendly air capability by allowing increased air observations and aerial troop movement. Roads are at their best conditions allowing movement of bulk supplies and equipment with a minimum of effort. Foot movement is at its best with the rivers and streams at a low level enhancing our ability to ford and pursue the enemy.

(d) Enemy's Disposition:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED STRENGTH</u>	<u>LAST CONFIRMED LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>
3 NVA Division	6000	Unk	Unk
HQ & Spt Units NT3 NVA Div	450	BR 8371	Mar 68
HQ & Spt Units, 18th Regt	275	BR 9251	Jan 68
7th NVA Bn 18th Regt	300	BR 9353	Jan 68
8th NVA Bn 18th Regt	200	BR 9735	Feb 68
9th NVA Bn 18th Regt	225	BR 9238	Jan 68
22d NVA Regt	1500	BR 7162	Apr 68
7th NVA Bn 22d Regt	260	BR 8280	Apr 68
8th NVA Bn 22d Regt	300	BR 9596	Apr 68
9th NVA Bn 22d Regt	270	BR 8887	Apr 68
2d VC Regt	1100	BR 8566	Apr 68
93d VC Bn 2d VC Regt	240	BR 7377	Apr 68
95th VC Bn 2d VC Regt	180	BR 7667	Apr 68
97th VC Bn 2d VC Regt	270	BR 6880	Apr 68
200th NVA AD Bn NT3	300	ES 7315	Jun 67
90th NVA Engr Bn NT3	200	BR 9095	Apr 67
300th NVA Arty Bn NT3	300	BR 9275	Jun 67
500th NVA Trans Bn NT3	335	BS 7910	Aug 67
551st NVA Sig Bn NT3	337	BR 8069	Jan 68
600th NVA Med Bn NT3	100	Kon River Area	Apr 67
300th NVA Sapper Bn NT3	230	BR 7863	Apr 68
36th VC Sapper Bn (LF)	125	CR 1531	Jan 68
50th VC Infantry Bn (LF)	100	CR 0125	Jan 68

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE.SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

E-210th VC Infantry Bn (LF) 150 CR 0523 Feb 68
407th Sapper Bn 350 Located in Western Binh Din Province

(e) Use of the LRP: Extensive use was made of the 74th Infantry (LRP) in Operation Cochine during the month of April. A total of 19 LRP operations were conducted. The mission assigned to the teams was generally that of trail watching in areas of suspected enemy activity. Secondary missions of bomb damage assessment and artillery assessment were also assigned. In conjunction with these missions, the LRP teams adjusted artillery fire on observed enemy personnel on thirteen occasions and directed three airstrikes. The LRP killed 2 NVA/VC (BC) and had 9 possible kills. In addition, 16 NVA/VC were possibly killed by LRP adjusted artillery. Six of the patrols were combined ARVN LRP/US LRP operations. These patrols proved to be highly instructive and profitable and will be continued in the future. Based upon observation of the LRP teams, several battalion size operations were conducted in the AO.

(f) Decisions and Plans Adopted with Reasons Based on Enemy Situations: During the reporting period, extremely close coordination was effected between intelligence gathering agencies and Brigade reaction forces to ensure rapid response to changes in the enemy situation. Operation Velvet Hammer was initiated on 11 April 1968, as a result of intelligence gathered during the first week of Brigade operations in the AO. On two occasions, the 2/503d Inf conducted operations in the vicinity of the Tiger Mountains, guided in part by agent reports and other intelligence sources. Exploitation of the agent net established by 1/50th Inf (Mech) resulted in the seizure of nearly 7 tons of rice which otherwise would have been used to feed NVA/VC forces in the area. APD and Infra-red were used to detect the presence of enemy troops in the AO. Based upon these indications, artillery concentrations, naval gunfire, and airstrikes were directed into enemy areas. Whenever possible, these fires were followed up by ground troops who assessed the damage. Also artillery and airstrikes were successfully employed against targets of opportunity reported by the LRP. On several occasions, LRP sightings were the basis for committing company size forces in the AO.

(3) Operation WALKER:

(a) Enemy Situation Prior to Operation Walker: The 407th Sapper Bn and the H15th Bn, both main force VC units, were the major enemy forces opposing Camp Radcliff and the AN KHE area. For the most part they generally operated outside the TAOR with the 407th Bn operating primarily North of Highway 19 and H15th Bn operating to the South of Highway 19. These units were not permanently located within the AN KHE area. Both units operated within the TAOR only long enough to conduct an attack and then immediately withdrew to a sanctuary outside the TAOR out of artillery range. The H15th Bn had its base in the KONTUM area. The 407th Sapper Bn operated generally in the PLEIKU area. A local VC force made up of platoon and squad size units operated in the general vicinity of AN KHE and along Highway 19. These units are the AN TUC Local Force and the AN KHE guerrilla force.

The 4th Bn 95th NVA Regiment has moved into the TAOR with the mission of interdicting Highway 19 between AN KHE (Checkpoint 26) and the Mang Yang Pass. With the insertion of the 4th Bn 95th NVA Regiment, the 407th Sapper Bn and H15th Bn have been relatively inactive in the area.

(b) Peculiarities and Weaknesses:

1. The enemy is vulnerable to air and artillery retaliation as well as observation by air in some areas of the TAOR.
2. Recent success by US troops, 1-503d Infantry and elements of the 1-69th Armor make the enemy vulnerable to psychological operations.

(c) Enemy Capabilities:

12

CONFIDENTIAL

19

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

1. The enemy can conduct a limited ground attack on Camp Radcliff supported with crew served weapons.
2. The enemy can conduct attacks on isolated posts with at least a company size force.
3. The enemy can conduct isolated mining, sabotage and terrorist activities against outpost within the AO along Highway 19.

(d) Significant Contacts:

1. 090914 Feb 68: BR 279459 convoy ambushed by 8-10 enemy personnel. Enemy ambush site was engaged by C/3/503d Inf, searched the area and found 4 NVA KIA (BC).
2. 091321 Feb 68: BR 275457 B/3/503d Inf made contact with unknown size enemy force waiting in ambush. Results: 1 NVA KIA (BC).
3. 091000 Mar 68: BR 339459 D/2/503d Inf found 2 VC KIA, killed by SA fire. Results: 2 VC KIA (BC).
4. 10 Apr 68: A/1/503d Inf 2 companies (-), 1-69th Armor reacted to an ambush on Highway 19 by 5th Bn 95 B Regiment. Air and artillery supported. Results: 46 NVA (BC) and 4 NVA PW.

(e) Terrain and Weather:

1. Terrain: Relief was characterized by high mountains with dense undergrowth with triple canopy in certain areas throughout the AO. Streams were generally full throughout the AO with the main river flowing SSW, with its source in the Northern portion of the AO. Cultivated fields are found throughout the AO, especially around AN KHE. Trails are numerous throughout the AO and were generally well used. Because of the wide area for maneuver and the unlimited staging areas available to the enemy, he can easily avoid contact, engaging US forces only on his own terms. Highway 19 bisecting the TAOR from the East to the West, is unpaved but passable. There are two mountain passes on each side of the AO.

2. Weather: Generally the weather was fair and warm with temperatures ranging from a high of 85 degrees to a low of 60 degrees. Winds were from the East at 5-8 knots. Sky conditions were generally scattered clouds at 2500 feet with some morning fog, clearing around 0900 hours. Visibility was from 6-7 miles during the mid-morning to late afternoon. Rainshowers were sparse and normally began in the late afternoon and terminated in the early morning hours.

(f) Enemy's Order of Battle: The following is a list representing the enemy's order of battle:

<u>UNIT & STR</u>	<u>SUB-UNITS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>WEAPONS</u>
407th Sapper Bn STR: 200	1st Co, AKA 41st, K40	Fleiku Province	3-81mm Mortars
	2d Co, AKA 42d, K50		2-60mm Mortars
	3d Co, AKA 3d, D60		3-57mm RR's
	4th Co, AKA 44th, K70 (82mm Mortars)		3-B-40 RL's
	5th Co, AKA 45th, K80		26-AK-47's
			46-CKC Carbines
			9-RPD LMG
			2-Auto Rifles
B-15 LF Bn STR: 400	C1 Co, AKA 316	Fleiku Province	82mm Mortars
	C2 Co, AKA 317		60mm Mortars
	C3 Co, AKA 318		75mm RR's
	C4 Co, AKA 319		MG, SMG, SA

13

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

20
15 May 1968

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

4th Bn 95 B NVA Regt	1st Co	Between An Khe	Unknown
STR: 250	2d Co	and the Mang Yang	
	4th Co	Pass	
5th Bn 95B NVA Regt	4 Co's	VC Valley (Binh	82mm Mortars
STR: 200		Dinh-Pleiku Prov)	
124th Mortar Co			
STR: Unk	Unk	Unk	4-82mm Mortars
D.26 LF Co	Unk	Southwest of AO	Unk
STR: 87		Walker	

(4) Operation BOLLING:

(a) Enemy Situation:

1. Disposition: Since 1 February 1968, the BOLLING Area of Operations has been the site of increased enemy activity. The enemy does not fully control the area around TUY HOA City because of the presence of friendly troops plus an aggressive revolutionary development program which has reduced the hold by the enemy on the population. Recently, reliable agents have reported the following units within the TUY HOA area or close enough to have influence upon the BOLLING Area of Operations. These units are:

- a. Hq, 5th NVA Division
(Total Approximate Strength: 2800)
- b. 95th NVA Regiment
(Total Approximate Strength: 900)
- c. 4th Battalion 95th NVA Regiment
(Total Approximate Strength: 100)
- d. 5th Battalion 95th NVA Regiment
(Total Approximate Strength: 150)
- e. 6th Battalion 95th NVA Regiment
(Total Approximate Strength: 200)
- f. 18B NVA Regiment
(Total Approximate Strength: 905)
- g. 95th Artillery Regiment
(Total Approximate Strength: 150)
- h. 30th Main Force (MP) Battalion
(Total Approximate Strength: 200)
- i. 85th Local Force (LF) Battalion
(Total Approximate Strength: 150)
- j. K-65 Engineer (Sapper) Company
(Total Approximate Strength: 80)
- k. K-76 Engineer (Sapper) Company
(Total Approximate Strength: 90)

2. Peculiarities and Weaknesses:

- a. The supply system of the enemy flows from west to east and can be best interdicted on the western edge of PHU YEN Province.

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

d. The major weakness of the enemy is his inability to maintain contact due to his marginal logistics system.

e. Recent successes by US, ROK and ARVN troops (4-503d Infantry) reflects the vulnerability of the NVA to psychological operations. The theme of the psychological operations should be to surrender to the ARVN and the direction of surrender should be given in the broadcast/leaflets.

2. Enemy Capabilities:

a. Continue to build up their units through infiltration, recruitment and conscription. Recent reports indicate that the 5th NVA Division has received replacements and is nearing the posture to launch offensive operations.

b. Attack installations and friendly forces in northern central PHU YEN Province with up to 4 combat effective battalions. These 4 battalions would consist of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Battalions of the 95th NVA Regiment and the 85th Local Force (LF) Battalion. The 30th Main Force (MF) Battalion is not believed to be presently combat effective. Attack in central and southern PHU YEN Province with the same combat battalions as listed; however, this effort in south PHU YEN could be reinforced by the 188 NVA Regiment. This would bring the strength of the enemy force to 7 combat battalions.

c. Continue harassment, terrorist and unconventional warfare activities throughout the province. The pontoon bridge at CQ 201351 is a target of particular interest as is the large bridge across the SONG BA River at TUY HOA.

d. Conduct battalion sized attacks reinforced by local forces on weakly defended district headquarters and outposts.

e. Reinforce the TUY HOA Valley area with elements of the 188 NVA Regiment within 5 days.

f. Combat Efficiency (PHU YEN Province, AO BOLLING): In PHU YEN Province, the 85th LF Bn is apparently regrouping and attempting to rebuild its combat effectiveness for continuing operations in TUY AN District. The heavy casualties inflicted on the 11th (AKA 4th) and 13th (AKA 6th) Bn's, 95th NVA Regt in early April 1968 by ARVN/ROK forces southwest of TUY HOA City has seriously impaired the combat effectiveness of these Bn's. The 12th Bn, 95th Regt, has remained out of contact and is believed to be rebuilding its combat potential in northwestern TUY HOA District. The 30th MF Bn will probably continue to conduct limited, small scale harassing operations in eastern HIEU XUONG District.

(b) Summary of Operation: In February Brigade Headquarters (-), 4th Bn-503d Inf, C and D Btry 3d Bn-319th Artillery, E Troop, 17th Cav and D Company 16th Armor participated in Operation BOLLING through 7 February. On 7 February Brigade Headquarters (-) and E Troop 17th Cav joined other Brigade Forces in Operation MACARTHUR. From 8-29 February 1968 the 4th Bn 503d Infantry, C and D Btry 3d Bn 319th Artillery and D Company 16th Armor participated in Operation BOLLING during which they were involved in 47 incidents, 30 of which were friendly initiated. The Brigade line up in Operation BOLLING remained the same throughout the month of March. The largest contact on 4 March was made by D-16th Armor when they smashed two enemy battalions (5th Bn 95th NVA Regt and the 85th VC Bn) which had attacked the 47th ARVN Headquarters at TUY HOA. Over 200 enemy soldiers were killed in the combined FWMAP operation.

(c) Significant Contacts:

1. 060315 Feb 68: CQ 1548 A/4/503 sighted 4 VC outside of their perimeter and took them under fire. Results: 1 VC KIA (BC).

2. 061145 Feb 68: CQ 051492 C/4/503 sighted and engaged 1 VC wearing khakis and rucksack moving NNE. Results: 1 NVA KIA (BC)

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968 ²²

SUBJECT: Operation Report Lessons Learned

2. 110300 Feb 68: CQ 047435 C/4/503 ambushed 2 VC. Results: 2 VC KIA (BC).
4. 041210 Mar 68: CQ 159471 L-16th Armor reinforced the 47th ARVN Regt in contact with two battalions. Contact continued until 041930. Results: 5 US KHA, 16 US WHA, 2 US MHA; 137 NVA KIA (BC).
5. 121100 Mar 68: CQ 102988 D-16th Armor had one M113 hit a mine. Area was searched and several VC were engaged. Results: 4 US WHA, 2 VC KIA (BC).
6. 181215 Mar 68: CQ 045446 A/4/503 observed 10 VC in the open. Artillery, airstrikes, and gunships were called. Results: 4 VC KIA (BC).
7. 042350 Apr 68: B/4/503 made contact with estimated 45 VC/NVA vic CQ 046466. Results: 1 VC/NVA KIA (BC).
8. 06 Apr 68: A/4/503 fired on 15 VC with weapons. Results: 1 VC KIA (BC).
9. 072050 Apr 68: CQ 053393 A/4/503 made contact with 8 VC while moving to an ambush site. Results: 2 VC KIA (BC).
10. 171334 Apr 68: C/4/503 sighted one NVA Co digging into their front. Artillery and A/S called. Results: 1 NVA KIA (BC), 1 AK-47, 1 81mm mortar CIA.
11. 171436 Apr 68: CQ 8844 D-16th Armor while escorting a convoy received SA from both sides of the road, head track destroyed by a mine. Artillery and A/S supported. Results: 1 US WHA, 1 APC destroyed; 5 VC/NVA KIA (BC).

(d) Terrain and Weather:

1. Terrain: The area of interest is located in PHU YEN Province and is bounded by coordinates BQ 7000, BQ 7060, CQ 1060 and CQ 3000. The eastern boundary is the South China Sea. Three-fourths of the area is mountainous and forested. Most of the remainder of the area is flat land used either for cultivation of rice, or other lowland crops. Along the coast there are rolling hills and sand dunes except where the mountain outcroppings meet the sea. Since most of the area consists of mountains and hills, there is no drainage problem. The major drainage system is formed by the DA RANG or SONG BA River and its tributaries. This river traverses the center of the AO from west to east, (BQ 7039 - CQ 6346). The tributaries flow generally north - south depending upon their location relative to the SONG BA. The river empties into the South China Sea. Vegetation in the plains area is predominantly rice fields. Further inland, dense broadleaf evergreen forest covers the mountain ridges with canopy rising in excess of 80 feet. Interprovincial Route 7B and Route 1 are the main lines of communication in the area.

2. Weather: The month of November, December and January are months of the Northeast Monsoon season in the area of operations. Surface winds during the period will prevail from the north-northeast. Wind speeds range up to 16 knots. Winds gusting to 30 knots may be expected in the immediate vicinity of thunderstorms, along exposed locations during strong northeasterly flow, and area under the influence of typhoons or tropical storms. Calm conditions are observed most frequently during night and early morning hours.

Precipitation from mid-December to March is light to moderate showers that occur in the mornings in the area of operations. Periods of three to five days without rain are common during the period. Cloudiness during the period includes considerable cloudiness in the mornings with ceilings below 1000 feet common in the exposed valleys. In general, the afternoons along the coast are partly cloudy with most clouds above 2000 feet. The major effect of clouds on operations will occur during the early or mid-morning hours in the exposed coastal area. Temperatures will range from 80 to

23
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

70 degrees along the coast and from 88 to 60 degrees in the interior. Relative humidities are high throughout the year. Mean monthly relative humidities are within the range of 70 to 90 percent. In the northeast monsoon the humidity along the northeast coast is about 91 percent.

(e) The following is a list representing the enemy's order of battle:

<u>UNIT & STR</u>	<u>SUB-UNITS</u>	<u>DATE & LOCATION</u>	<u>WEAPONS</u>
5th NVA Div (FWD) STR: Unk	95th NVA Regt	Unlocated	N/A
5th NVA Div (MAIN) STR: 2200	95th NVA Regt 18B NVA Regt Support Units	BQ 877238 (Div Hq) Dec 67	See Subordinate units
95th NVA Regt STR: 675	4th Bn 5th Bn 6th Bn 95th Arty Bn	BQ 9953 Apr 68	6-82mm Mortars 60mm Mortars 6-12.7mm AAMG's 75mm RR's B-40 RL's K-51 Rifles K-56 Rifles AK-47 Rifles SKS's 4-50 cal HMG's LMG's 6-DK28s
4th Bn 95th Regt STR: 60	1st Co 2d Co 3d Co 4th Co	CQ 0242 Apr 68	15-MG's 27-AR's 6-82mm Mortars 3- RR's 27-B-40 RL's 27-T65 (GL)
5th Bn 95th Regt STR: 150	5th Co 6th Co 7th Co 8th Co	CQ 0051 Apr 68	15-MG's 27-AR's 6-82mm Mortars 3-RR's 27-B-40 RL's 27-T65 (BL)
6th Bn 95th Regt STR: 60	9th Co 10th Co 11th Co 12th Co	CQ 0347 Apr 68	4-M1945 MG's 3-75mm RR's 3-82mm Mortars 9-MG's (Chicom) 27-B-40 RL's
30th MF Bn STR: 150	1st Co 3d Co 5th Co 7th Co 9th Co	CQ 0824 Apr 68	3-60mm Mortars 4-12.7mm MG's 3-57mm RR's 2-B-40 RL's Various Small Arms
85th LF Bn STR: 150	DK-2 Co DK-4 Co DK-6 Co DK-8 Co or (poss 1st thru 5th Co)	CQ 0461 Apr 68	81mm Mortars 60mm Mortars 57mm RR's HMG's 30 Cal MG's Individual Weapons

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

34
15 May 1968

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

K-65 Engr (Sapper) STR: 80	Co's Unk Poss 5 Co's	CQ 0347 Apr 68	3-BAR's 9-B-40 RL's 15-AK-47's 24-CKC's 75 Kilo TNT Hand Grenades
K-76 Engr (Sapper) STR: 90	Unk	Unk	AK-47's CKC's AR's B-40 RL's BAR's Ea plt has 20 anti-per mines Co has at least 150 kilo of TNT at all times
377B LF Co STR: Unk	Unk	Unk	Unk
95th Arty Bn 68th Regt STR: 125	H-14 CO 7th Co 8th Co	EP 8634 Mar 68	4-120mm Mortars 4-75mm RR's 20-SMG's 21-AK-47's 37-SKS's

b. Enemy personnel losses for the reporting period were as follows:

	<u>OPN BOLLING</u>	<u>OPN WALKER</u>	<u>OPN MACARTHUR</u>	<u>OPN COCHISE</u>	<u>BRIGADE TOTAL</u>
NVA/VC KIA (BC)	196	24	240	77	557
NVA/VC KIA (POSS)	28	8	56	43	135
NVA/VC PW	16	2	9	11	38
Civil Defendants	30	4	21	54	109
Returnees	0	1	0	2	3

c. Enemy equipment/supplies/installation losses for the reporting period were as follows:

	<u>OPN BOLLING</u>	<u>OPN WALKER</u>	<u>OPN MACARTHUR</u>	<u>OPN COCHISE</u>	<u>BRIGADE TOTAL</u>
<u>WEAPONS</u>					
AK-47 rifles	67	3	54	3	127
AK-50 rifles	0	0	1	0	1
SKS	2	6	10	9	27
M16	3	0	1	2	6
Carbines	6	0	2	11	19
BAR	0	0	3	2	5
Mausser Rifles	0	0	0	5	5

CONFIDENTIAL

25
CONFIDENTIAL

AVRE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

	<u>OPN BOLLING</u>	<u>OPN WALKER</u>	<u>OPN MACARTHUR</u>	<u>OPN COCHISE</u>	<u>BRIGADE TOTAL</u>
M-1 Rifles	2	1	0	0	3
1908 Springfield	1	0	0	0	1
12 Ga. Shotgun	0	0	1	1	2
.30 Cal Rifles	0	0	1	0	1
7.62 French	0	1	0	0	1
50 Sub MG	0	0	1	0	1
DPM MG	0	0	1	0	1
RPD LMG	12	0	8	1	21
Chicom SMG	0	0	0	2	2
M-2 SMG	0	0	0	2	2
M-60	0	0	0	1	1
MAT 49	0	0	0	1	1
B-40 Rkt Launcher	3	0	7	0	10
US IAW	0	0	1	0	1
60mm Mortars	0	0	3	0	3
82mm Mortars	1	0	0	0	1
57mm RR	5	0	0	0	5
<u>AMMUNITION, MINES and EXPLOSIVE:</u>					
Small Arms Rds	913	1265	14,790	6974	19,466
Hand Grenades	41	71	247	22	364
M-79 Rounds	2	0	37	23	62
60mm Mortar Rds	2	10	557	0	562
82mm Mortar Rds	0	36	48	52	136
60mm Fuzes	0	0	29	0	29
60mm Charges	0	0	25	0	25
Firing Devices	0	0	2	0	2
Satchel Charges	0	108	3	0	111
122mm Rkt Rds	0	0	58	0	58
120 Mtr Rds	0	0	50	0	50
Mines	0	26	2	2	30

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

26
15 May 1968

AVBF-TC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

	<u>OPN BOLLING</u>	<u>O: N WALKER</u>	<u>OPN MACARTHUR</u>	<u>OPN COCHISE</u>	<u>BRIGADE TOTAL</u>
Traps	0	20	0	0	20
TNT, lbs	0	0	50	0	50
B-40 Rkts	8	1	26	3	38
12.7mm Rds	0	0	36	0	36
Blasting Caps	10	0	248	0	258
Bangalore Torpedoes	0	0	10	0	10
75mm Rds	0	0	9	16	25
Concussion Grenades	0	0	3	0	3
Claymore Mines	0	1	4	0	5
Fuze Lighters	0	0	64	0	64
VC Stick Grenades	0	3	0	0	3
AW Magazines	11	0	0	18	29
Det Cord, ft.	50	0	0	0	50
Trip Flares, boxes	0	1	0	0	1
<u>INSTALLATIONS</u>					
Huts	31	128	15	1	175
Bunkers	53	103	39	0	195
Tunnels	3	13	3	0	19
AA Pns	0	0	2	0	2
<u>FOOD</u>					
Rice, lbs	25,460	2,400	18,664	190,445	236,969
Salt, lbs	0	0	85½	0	85½
Grain, lbs	0	100	2,190	0	2,290
<u>MISCELLANEOUS</u>					
Rucksack	35	2	156	11	204
VN Plasters	0	0	\$1,740	0	\$1,740
Web Belts	6	0	2	0	8
Gas Mask	0	0	29	8	37
Utensils	0	0	153	150	303
Uniforms	0	0	8	0	8

27

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

	<u>OPN BOLLING</u>	<u>OPN WALKER</u>	<u>OPN MACARTHUR</u>	<u>OPN COCHISE</u>	<u>BRIGADE TOTAL</u>
Ponchos	3	0	17	4	29
Hammocks	6	0	7	1	14
Helmet	0	0	1	8	9
Clothing, lbs	10	30	413	910	1363
Field Jacket	1	0	2	0	3
Marijuana, bushels	0	0	1	0	1
Tobacco, lbs	0	220	0	0	220
Rice Grinding Machine	0	3	0	0	3
Crossbows	0	3	0	0	3
Punji Stakes	0	7000	0	0	7000
Codine Pills	47	0	0	0	47
Sandbags	0	300	0	0	300
Canteen	2	0	1	0	3
Medical Supplies, lbs	0	0	176	42	218
Batteries	0	0	0	76	76
Documents, lbs	5	1	15	82	103
Printing Press	0	0 ¹	0	1	1
PRC-25	0	0	0	1	1
Entrenching Tool	0	0	59	4	63
7 X 50 Binoculars	0	0	0	2	2

CONFIDENTIAL

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AVBE-SC/NHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

4. Combat Operations:

February

In February the 1st Battalion 503d Infantry and A Battery 3d Battalion 319th Artillery engaged in Operation MACARTHUR terminated operations in AO Relief which had been controlled by Task Force POWERHOUSE at Camp Enari (Pleiku) and began the movement to Ban Me Thout. As the 1st Battalion 503d Infantry and A Battery 3d Battalion 319th Artillery withdrew into Camp Enari for helilift to Ban Me Thout they were released from OPCON to TF POWERHOUSE and assigned under the control of Colonel Henry A. Barber III, Senior Advisor, 23d ARVN Division to reinforce the 8th ARVN Cavalry, 45th ARVN Regiment and 23d Ranger Battalion in Ban Me Thout. TF POWERHOUSE (-) remained at Camp Enari and prepared for future operations and the released 1st Bn 503d Inf was helilifted from Camp Enari to Ban Me Thout over the 2d, 3d and 4th of February. At 0900 on 5 February the 2d Bn 503d Inf and B Btry 3d Bn 319th Arty were released from the OPCON 2d Bde, 4th Inf Div and returned to the control of TF POWERHOUSE. The 2d Bn 503d Inf then moved from Duc Co to Camp Enari on 5 & 6 February. With the arrival of the 2d Bn 503d Inf and the assumption of OPCON of the 2d - 1st Cav, Task Force POWERHOUSE commenced search and destroy operations in AO Julian on 7 February with a series of Company size combat assaults and establishment of Fire Support Base "Pat" (vic AR980 450) to contain B-3-319th Arty. D-2-503d Inf after leaving their landing zone killed 5 NVA and captured 1 PW, 3 AK-47's, 3 LMG and 1 B40 RL in a series of small skirmishes throughout the afternoon. On 8 February the 173d Airborne Brigade (-) closed the Brigade HQ's area in Suoi Do (vic BR037545) and assumed control of the 2d Bn 503d Inf from Task Force POWERHOUSE. E Troop 17th Cav arrived with the Brigade and assumed the mission of Brigade security and reaction force. Task Force 173d Abn Bde also assumed control of 2d of 1st Cav which continued its road security operations in the Suoi Do area. The 2d of 1st Cav escorted convoys on Highway 14 and 19 between Kontum and Pleiku during daylight.

From 8 to 14 Feb Task Force 173d Abn Bde (-) conducted search and destroy operations in AO Julian with almost negative incidents except for contact with an occasional small band of VC/NVA and discovery of a few small food and ammunition caches. 2 - 1st Cav and E Troop 17th Cav escorted large truck convoys between Kontum and Pleiku without trouble except for isolated mine incidents resulting in light damage.

On 15 February Task Force 173d Abn Bde (-) terminated operations in AO Julian and commenced redeployment by air to Ban Me Thout East where the 1st Bn 503d Inf was operating. A, C and D-2-503d Inf, B-3-319th Arty (-) and elements of the 173d Abn Bde Tactical Operations Center Command Post deployed by C-130 aircraft from New Pleiku Airfield to Ban Me Thout East. The remainder of the Task Force closed Camp Enari from Suoi Do and the 2d-1st Cav was released from the Brigade's control. With the arrival of TF 173d Abn Bde (-) at Ban Me Thout the 1st Bn 503d Inf and A-3-319th Arty were returned to Brigade control; two Mobile Strike Forces (under USSF Command) were placed OPCON to TF 173d Abn Bde (-). The Brigade (-) then commenced search and destroy operations south of Ban Me Thout with 2 Battalions of Infantry, 2 Mobile Strike Forces, 2 batteries of 105mm (How) in support and E Troop 17th Cav as the Brigade reaction and security force. From 18 to 23 February the Brigade conducted vigorous search and destroy operations with negative contact except for two food cache discoveries of 1500 pounds of grain and 14,500 pounds of rice.

The 1st Bn 503d Inf was airlifted from Ban Me Thout East to Kontum City on 24 February by direction of JFFV due to heavy contacts the 1st Bn 22d Inf had been having and became OPCON to the 1st of 22d Inf. The 2d Bn 503d Inf continued search and destroy operations south of Ban Me Thout with negative contact. Task Force 173d Abn Bde (-) moved by air from Ban Me Thout East to Camp Enari and assumed control of the 1st Bn 503d Inf and 1st Bn 22d Inf. The 2d Bn 503d Inf terminated operations and moved to Ban Me Thout East for deployment by air to Kontum. USSF Mobile Strike Force 17 was released to its parent unit. As the month of February closed Task Force 173d Abn Bde (-) TAC CP operating from the edge of Kontum City controlled Task Force 1-503d Inf with A-1-8th Inf, E-3-8th Inf, two Camp Strike Forces and Task Force 1-22d Inf with a Mobile Strike Force and C-4-42d Arty. E-17th Cav secured Kontum airfield and one

CONFIDENTIAL

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AVBE-SC/4HD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

platoon of 1-69th Armor provided FSB security. A-3-319th Arty remained with the 1st Bn 503d Inf but B-3-319th Arty was located at Camp Enari. The 2d Bn 503d Inf began movement to An Khe to exchange places with the 3d Bn 503d Inf as the Camp Radcliff Quick Strike Battalion. The 3d Bn 503d Inf moved by air to Kontum airfield. On 27 February B-1-503d Inf engaged an NVA platoon (vic ZA203747) resulting in 3 US KHA, 11 US WHA, 4 NVA KIA, 1 RPD, 3 AK-47's and 1 SKS captured. In mid afternoon C-3-8th Inf (OPCON to 1st Bn 503d Inf) came under mortar and SA fire for two hours until contact was broken. D-1-22d Inf engaged an unknown size enemy force (vic AR825950) while searching a bunker complex and suffered 24 WHA. A-1-8th Inf was reverted to its parent unit on 27 February. The next day, 28 February, C-3-8th Inf was returned to its parent unit also. As February closed the Task Force 173d Abn Bde (-) pressed search and destroy operations in the Kontum area making daily contact with NVA units.

In February the 173d Airborne Brigade (-) continued Operation BOLLING in Phu Yen Province with the mission of finding, fixing and destroying the 95th NVA Regiment; providing security for the civilian rice harvest (in conjunction with the ROK 28th Regiment and the 47th ARVN Regiment); furnishing security for the 577th Engineer Battalion and 173d Engineer Company along Highway 436, routes 68 and 2D as required and providing a rapid reaction company. The 4th Bn 503d Inf in conjunction with the Camp Strike Force elements form the USSF Camp at Dong Tre and Cung Son, and Task Force Mitchell (D Co 16th Armor and E Troop 17th Cav) conducted search and destroy operations west of Tuy Hoa and helped mop up the aftermath of the NVA TET offensive in Tuy Hoa. (See Annex E for report on TET fighting in Operation BOLLING).

On 8 February the 173d Airborne Brigade (-) departed Tuy Hoa to assume operational control of the Brigade's two Battalion Task Force Forces (TF POWERHOUSE) in Kontum Province. The 4th Bn 503d Inf assumed control of Operation BOLLING and the remaining Brigade forces which consisted of C and D Battery, 3d Bn 319th Artillery and D Company 16th Armor. Elements of the 5th Bn 27th Artillery and C Battery, 6th Bn, 32d Artillery provided general support in the area of operations. Throughout the rest of February Task Force 4th Bn 503d Inf continued search and destroy operations along with the Camp Strike Force elements making only light contact. Elements of the 51st Chemical Detachment flew crop destruction missions in VC territory and Engineer troops conducted mine sweeping operations. D Co 16th Armor split its platoons between fire base security and convoy escorts to Vung Ro Bay. On 26 February the Brigade S-5 started training of 17 KIT CARSON SCOUTS (former NVA/VC) for use in the Brigade. The enemy avoided contact during the month of February.

In February the 3d Battalion 503d Infantry continued to secure the Camp Radcliff/An Khe complex, secure Highway 19 in the Tactical Area of Responsibility, conduct operations within the TAOR and to support revolutionary development in the Walker TAOR. The 3d Bn 503d Infantry conducted operations in AO WALKER until 27 February when they exchanged places with the 2d Bn 503d Inf; the 2d Bn 503d Inf then assumed responsibility for AO WALKER. The Brigade exchanged Battalions again in March when the 1st Bn 503d Inf replaced the 2d Bn 503d Inf and continued operations. The Brigade made an effort to exchange infantry battalions about every month so that each battalion would have a chance to utilize the Brigade's rear area services stationed at Camp Radcliff. The 173d Support Battalion continued to furnish guards and emergency provisional companies for the defense of Camp Radcliff. For a closer break down of operations of the Quick Strike Battalion see the 3d Bn 503d Infantry's Combat After Action Report (17 January - 27 February 1968) attached as inclosure D.

The 3d Bn 503d Inf employed company size search and destroy operations, multiple night ambushes with local Vietnamese Forces, security missions along Highway 19 and constantly held one company as a rapid reaction force. Contact with enemy forces was light during February coming mainly from sniper fire and small ambushes along Highway 19. On 0400 hours 6 February Camp Radcliff received approximately 100 rounds of mixed 82mm and 60mm mortar fire resulting in 1 US KHA, 24 WHA (one serious) and 22 aircraft damaged. Enemy mortar positions were engaged by SA, M-79, mortar and artillery fire with unknown results. On 8 February rapid reaction to an enemy ambush killed 5 NVA and captured 5 weapons. Camp Radcliff was again mortared on 18 February but rapidly returned fire terminated the attack after a dozen rounds. Close coordination and combined operations with Popular Forces were highly successful, stopping enemy incidents along the southern Camp Radcliff perimeter.

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968 ³⁰

Operations during the month of February by the Brigade was supported by on call TAC Sorties and 60 FAC Sorties. Air Force fighter bombers were available 90 - 95% of the time for preplanned air strikes and were quickly available for immediate airstrikes. Supporting artillery (3d Bn 319th Artillery) fired a total of 566 missions and expended 7064 rounds. The Brigade Aviation Platoon (Casper) supported all operations. A statistical report of their activities follows:

<u>UH-1H Missions</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Missions</u>
Resupply	601	230 (4 tons)
Command and Control	893	381
Maintenance	134	39
Total Hours Flown	581	
Total Passengers	780	

<u>OH-13S Missions</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Missions</u>
Command and Control	1300	375
Maintenance	309	83
Total Hours Flown	312	
Total Passengers	260	

Grand Total Sorties UH-1H	1628
OH-13S	1609
Grand Total Missions UH-1H	650
OH-13S	458

Total 7.62mm ammo expended 24,000 rounds

Operations during the month of February 1968 resulted in the following VC/NVA and friendly casualties:

<u>VC/NVA Losses</u>	<u>US Losses</u>
KIA (BC) 133	KHA 21
KIA (Poss) 17	WHA 91
Civil Defendents . . 42	MHA 1
Returns 0	Non battle dead . . 0
POW 10	Non battle injured . 15

March

During March 1968 Task Force 173d Abn Bde (-) consisting of 1st Bn 503d Inf, 3d Bn 503d Inf, Task Force 1-22d Inf, 4th Inf Div, E Troop 17th Cav and A & B Btry, 3d Bn 319th Atry continued operations in the vicinity of Kontum. The 1st Bn 503d Inf and 3d Bn 503d Inf consisted of four rifle companies and HQ Co; Task Force 1-22d Inf consisted of four organic rifle companies and an additional mobile strike company. E Troop 17th Cav was deployed at TOE strength while A & B Btry consisted of 5 guns each,

31

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

in addition B-6-14th Arty and C-5-16th Arty provided support for the Task Force in Kontum. Search and destroy operations continued with light contact until 3 March when D-1-503d Inf engaged an unknown size enemy force in bunkers (vic AR 854976) at 1500 hours in the afternoon. C-1-503d Inf moved north to reinforce D Company and engaged the enemy in the same vicinity. A-1-503d Inf was helilifted from FSB 2 to an LZ vic AR 854976 closing at 1730; A Company moved north to reinforce C & D 1-503d Inf and engaged an unknown size enemy force at AR 853978 also. Contact was broken at 1835 hours. Contact resulted in 7 US KHA, 2 US MHA and 24 US WHA. B-3-503d Inf had also made contact with an unknown size enemy force vic ZA 135765 and killed 4 NVA while suffering 3 US KHA and 8 US WHA. The next day B-3-503d Inf found 3 more NVA killed by A/S. Earlier that morning (0235 hrs) C-1-22d Inf received 25 incoming mortar rounds, all of which landed outside of their perimeter. For the next few days the three battalions kept three companies moving on search and destroy operations while providing fire base security for supporting artillery with the 4th company. Elements of E Troop 17th Cav conducted sweep operations. At 0945, 6 March E Troop 17th Cav, moving south along Highway 14 made contact with an estimated NVA Company vic ZA 217730. After two hours contact appeared to have been broken but when E Troop made a sweep of the contact area they again came under enemy fire, this time from the vic of ZA 219728. The Cav troop continued to press the attack throughout the afternoon and the enemy withdrew east. At 1500 hours 1st Platoon B-1-69th Armor became OPCON to the 173d Abn Bde and was sent to reinforce E Troop 17th Cav. The reinforced Cav Troop continued to push until 1730 hours when they ran up against enemy bunkers and pulled back to call in air and artillery. The sweep resulted in 2 US KHA, 6 US WHA, 2 VN Civ KHA, 4 NVA KIA and 2 NVA PW's.

The next morning (7 March) 2-8th Inf was released to the OPCON of the 173d Abn Bde and E Troop 17th Cav was placed under the 2-8th Inf. At 1000 hours A & C 2-8th Inf, E Troop 17th Cav and 1st Platoon B-1-69th Armor conducted a sweep of the 6 March contact area. The sweep through the enemy's bunker area resulted in 1 US WHA, 17 NVA KIA, 5 AK-47's, 4 B-40 rounds, 3 75mm rounds and assorted web gear. At 1600 hours the sweep team returned to Highway 14 and E Troop 17th Cav was released back to the 173d Abn Bde and returned to Kontum airfield. The 2-8th Inf and the 1 Platoon, B-1-69th Armor were released to the 2d Bde 4th Inf Div. The infantry battalions continued the search and destroy missions with the 3d Bn 503d Inf pushing 2 companies north along the Ya Krong Bolak River.

Two companies made contact with the NVA on 8 March; C-1-503d Inf jumped 5 NVA vic AR 844997 at 1000 hours and killed 4 while capturing 2 AK-47's. A-1-503d Inf also made a slight contact killing one NVA. Earlier at 0100 hours C-3-503d Inf and B-3-8th Inf (vic ZA 112912) received 15-20 rounds of mortar fire, both companies suffered wounded of 2 and 24 men respectively. Also during the 8th Headquarters and Headquarters Company A and C of 3-8th Inf and A-6-29th Artillery marched overland from Dak To to Kontum. 1-22d Inf prepared to move to a new AO (CP 40) vic Pleiku and was released from Operation Control of the 173d Abn Bde being replaced by the 3-8th Inf. B-6-14th Arty and C-5-16th Arty were also withdrawn from Brigade control. From 9 to 11 March the three rifle battalions and three artillery batteries Task Force under the command of the 173d Abn Bde (-) continued search and destroy missions making only slight contact receiving occasional ineffective mortar fire and encountering isolated land mines on the highway.

The 2-8th Inf and A-4-42d Arty were placed under the control of the 173d Abn Bde (-) at 0100 hours 12 March to replace the 3-8th Inf and A-6-29th Arty which reverted to the 1st Bde 4th Inf. At 0545 hours FSB 9 came under an attack of 35 82mm mortar rounds, 10 B-40 rocket rounds, SA and AW fire resulting in 1 US KHA, 5 US WHA, 1 4.2 mortar destroyed and 3 4.2 mortar sites destroyed. Contact was broken at 0815 hours followed by arrival of C-1-503d Inf by helicopter. A sweep of the area revealed one NVA KIA (BC) and 1 LMG. C-1-503d Inf made brief contact with the unknown size enemy force again at 1540 hours. Just before noon elements of the 173d Engineer Co as a separate convoy on route 14, out of Pleiku were ambushed from the west (vic ZA 194675) by an unknown size enemy force resulting in 1 US KHA, 4 US WHA, and unknown enemy casualties. During early afternoon A-1-503d Inf found 1 Chicom radio and some documents, D-1-503d Inf found 70 NVA rucksacks and 1 SKS carbine and B-3-503d Inf found 350 US type 60mm mortar shells vic ZA 143905. The 2-8th Inf convoy came under

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968 ³²

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

a brief ten minute ambush from the east vic KA 169838. The ambush was by an estimated NVA Company using SA, AW and B-40 rockets, fortunately with negative results.

D-3-503d Inf contacted an estimated NVA Company at 1015 hours 13 March vic ZA 147943. The NVA troops employed 60mm mortars and B-40 rockets. 5 NVA were killed and 1 US KHA while 8 were WHA. B-3-503d Inf was helilifted to reinforce D Company at 1430 hours and contact was broken at 1600. Meanwhile about 1125 hours D-1-503d Inf had also run up against an estimated company and came under heavy SA and AW fire vic ZB 022004. A, B and D 1-503d Inf moved to reinforce D Company and also came under SA and AW fire from the same location. By mid afternoon (1535 hours) A, B and D 1-503d Inf had moved into position and assaulted the enemy bunker position under heavy fire. Contact was broken as darkness approached (1745 hours) with the known results of 1 NVA KIA (BC), 5 US MHA and 7 US WHA.

The next morning D-1-503d Inf found the 5 US MHA from the 13th, all were dead. Later in the morning D-3-503d Inf found 1 NVA body, 1 LMG, 1 AK-47, 2 SKS Carbines, 1 60mm mortar, 9 grenades and 50 rucksacks in the area of their contact on the 13th. That afternoon just before 1500 hours, C-1-503d Inf encountered numerous NVA snipers in trees vic ZA 048982, after a two hour fire fight 7 NVA were killed and 1 US KHA and 1 paratrooper was wounded.

On the morning of 16th March C-1-503d Inf found 35 NVA bodies vic ZA 041988 and later killed one more in a tunnel. A-1-503d uncovered an NVA cache containing 23 82mm mortar rounds, 41 82mm fuzes, 14 hand grenades and 580 SA rounds. At 1715 hours A-1-503d came under 82mm mortar and M-79 fire from an unknown NVA force and suffered 10 US wounded.

Contact continued throughout the 17th as aggressive paratroopers pushed out, continuously pressing to fix the NVA and keep them off balance; the NVA countered with mortar and harassing fire. At 0130 hours D-3-503d Inf observed rockets falling near their position and at the same time had approximately 50 rounds of 60mm mortar fire fall just outside their perimeter. A & D 1-503d Inf marched north northeast moving towards Hill 1064 with D Company in the lead. Contact was made with NVA in bunkers vic ZB 034010 resulting in 1 US KHA and 2 US WHA. Contact was broken at 1745 hours; however, an hour later D Company received SA, AW and mortar fire vic ZB 037011 which cost 10 US WHA. B-1-503d Inf also engaged an enemy force in bunkers at ZA 038991. At noon E Troop 17th Cav found and destroyed fifty 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds. That evening at 1930 hours B-3-503d Inf and D-3-503d Inf were probed by approximately 40-60 NVA vic ZA 154955 causing 10 US WHA, enemy casualties were unknown; artillery was fired in support. At about the same time B-1-503d Inf night ambush engaged an unknown size enemy force and had 2 paratroopers wounded.

A & D 1-503d returned to Hill 1064 and found half a dozen NVA dead as well as recovered 7 US bodies from the earlier battle. Earlier that morning at 0400 B & D 3-503d Inf received a probing attack from the north, northwest and south vic ZA 154955; the NVA reconned against the perimeter with SA, hand grenades and rifle grenades wounding 3 US. Enemy casualties were unknown. Companies conducting search and destroy operations continuously engaged dug in KV and snipers, countering with artillery and organic weapons.

As contact increased with NVA forces more troops poured into the area and everyday saw two or three company size contacts although none of them developed into a decisive fight. By 23 March B & D Co 1-8th Inf, A, B, C Companys and Scout Platoon 2-8th Inf, the entire 3-8th Inf and four artillery units; A-4-42d Arty, C-6-29th Arty and A-1-92d Arty were operating in the vicinity of Kontum with the 1-503d Inf and 3-503d Inf and their two artillery batteries. In addition to maintaining pressure on the NVA forces the searching troopers also uncovered enemy caches between 20 and 23 March. On the 20th A-1-503d Inf discovered 50 120mm mortar shells, 24 122mm rocket rounds, 26 122mm rocket warheads and some unidentified warheads. The next day the 1-503d Inf also found 10 NVA rucksacks, several AK-47's, a LMG, hand grenades and 2 packets of enemy documents.

On the 23d companies of the 1-503d Inf, 3-503d Inf, 2-8th Inf and 3-8th Inf

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBEL-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

all made contact with NVA troops. Units of the 3-503d Inf, 1-8th Inf and 2-8th Inf concentrated their effort in coordinated attacks on enemy positions vic of Hill 600 (ZA 153957). The enemy was pounded by air and artillery throughout the day. Losses for the fighting were light with only 1 US KHA and 20 US WHA, while 6 NVA were killed by body count. Enemy casualties by air and artillery were unknown.

The morning of the 23d saw C-3-503d Inf move from their night laager site to a position east of Hill 600 and then attacked west against the bunker complex on Hill 600, killing 1 NVA and finding 27 bunkers and 3 claymore mines. As C Company pushed on west A-3-503d Inf linked up with them and they made contact with an unknown size enemy force about 1400 hours vic ZA 151960. The two companies maneuvered against the enemy bunkers and came under heavy fire to include B-40 rockets and rifle grenades. Contact was broken at 1730 hours to allow A/S to hit the enemy. The para-troopers loss 1 killed and 10 wounded while counting 5 NVA bodies. C & D 3-8th Inf passed thru the complex finding 3 NVA KIA and 2 rifles; as they pressed on they suffered two wounded from AW fire. The company then called in A/S on a group of NVA they observed digging in vic VA 937923; a sweep of the area combined with A/S claimed 18 NVA KIA.

Summary of Operation MACARTHUR: During February and March the Brigade responded to several different situations which developed during Operation MACARTHUR. The first movement was to Pleiku in AO JULIAN to counter the threat of the 5th Bn 25B Regt which apparently was stopped initially when one Company of the 2-503d had contact shortly after landing on the LZ. At the same time the 2-1st Cav on Highway 19 made contact with an ambush resulting in two companies of the 5th Bn being routed. After that the 2d Bn continued to move to the east to find and fix the 5th Bn but this never evolved. The 1st Bn 503d Inf had gone to Ban Me Thout in response to a definite threat of two enemy battalions against the city. ARVN elements had gathered in around the city itself. The 1st Bn 503d had only one good contact and they were basically unable to develop this contact because they only had their organic 4.2 mortars and 1 battery (5 guns) of 105 howitzers (supporting) at the time. Once contact was made the enemy moved out of range of the 105's and the 1st Bn couldn't pursue. When the 2d Bn 503d Inf moved to Ban Me Thout they made contact with local VC forces and elements of the 22d NVA Regt which successfully moved out of their range. While at Ban Me Thout 3 American prisoners were reported held by the NVA and the Brigade almost ceased all offensive operations for three days to pursue and free the prisoners.

When the Brigade was called away from Ban Me Thout a threat had developed at Pleiku again so the Brigade was given orders to move northeast of Pleiku into an area which was the home of high level elements of both NVA and Front activities; however, before the Brigade could deploy it was ordered to Kontum where the 1st Bn 22d Inf was in heavy contact. Once the Brigade moved into Kontum with the TAC CP the Brigade assumed OPCON of the 1st Bn 22d Inf Bde. The 24th NVA Regt northeast of Kontum never engaged the Brigade without being dug in and knowing that they were covered with mortar fire. The first two or three times Brigade units had real trouble with these contacts and took the worst end of the bargain. The Brigade was into a real tough fight; the enemy soldiers were well trained and disciplined.

In brief at Kontum the Brigade entered areas where nobody else had gone, even the USSF at Peler Kleng states they had operated throughout the area but when pinned down they indicated they hadn't been in the area of contact for six or eight months. The NVA positions were well dug in; tunnels, bunkers, ect. The place was evidently used as a forward base area when they would store 120mm mortars and rocket warheads. Although the Brigade didn't stay and finish the campaign it was a worthwhile effort in that the Brigade moved into these known base camps. The NVA was a tough opponent. During this crucial period the 1st Bn 503d Inf received over 60 new replacements. Some troopers were killed after less than a day in combat. Major Gunderson had taken over command of the 1-503d and his baptism under fire was under difficult circumstances. At the same time the 3d Bn 503d Inf had been taken over by LTC Fisher and both new commanders were feeling their way around.

During March Task Force 5th Battalion 503d Infantry with C and D Battery 3d

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968 ³⁴

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

Battalion 319th Artillery, D Company 16th Armor and Camp Strike Force units OPCON to the Task Force continued search and destroy missions in AO BOLLING (west of Tuy Hoa). Task Force elements maintained daily contact with VC/NVA forces operating in the Tuy Hoa area, however, the enemy was almost always found in small groups. The largest enemy contact took place on 4 March when D-16th Armor was committed in support of units of the 47th ARVN Regiment just north of Tuy Hoa City which had come under attack early on the morning of the 4th by the 5th Bn 95th NVA Regiment, 85th Local Force VC Battalion, 25th Recon Sniper Company and elements of the 17th Mortar Recoilless Rifle Company. The NVA were dug in in three villages between Tuy Hoa North Airfield and the ocean.

The 47th ARVN Regiment blocked the enemy to the south and west while the D Co 16th Armor Company Commander placed one platoon in full defilade to the ocean side of the last village as a blocking force. Between 1000 and 1100 hours the remaining two platoons of APC's supported by F-100's from the 308th Tactical Fighter Squadron, helicopter gunships and ARVN Infantry began their push against the first NVA held village from the north. Enemy resistance was fierce and the attack was halted momentarily when one APC was knocked out and another damaged. The airborne armor troopers renewed the attack and pushed through the village killing many NVA and VC. As the afternoon continued the armored APC's cleared the second village with massed .50 caliber fire and air support. The continuous pressure on the NVA/VC caused many of the enemy to try and flee across the open rice paddies covered by the interlocking .50 caliber machine guns of the blocking force platoon and they inflicted heavy casualties on all escape attempts with their massed fire.

The attack continued into the third village where the fighting became especially fierce as the APC's approached the enemy CP. The withdrawal of the supporting ARVN Infantry as the APC's closed on the enemy CP allowed the NVA/VC to work close to the APC's with anti tank weapons from prepared positions. After several of the attacking APC's took direct B-40 Rocket and Recoilless Rifle hits, the lack of supporting infantry and rapidly approaching darkness forced the armor to withdraw but not until they had recovered their wounded and destroyed all damaged equipment.

D-16th Armor was credited with 137 NVA KIA (BC) during the action. D Company losses were 7 killed, 21 wounded and 3 missing (burned beyond recognition when their gasoline powered APC exploded). ROK and ARVN units completed the mop up of the battlefield the next day.

LRP teams were utilized during the month for recon, surveillance and screening missions. They made contact with small bands of NVA/VC almost every mission. D Company 16th Armor escorted convoys between An Khe and Phu Hiep and Phu Hiep and Vung Ro Bay for the most of March. The only aggressive action by enemy forces besides their major effort on 4 March was a 12 to 20 round 60mm mortar attack on FSB 16 27 March which caused negative casualties.

Only light contact was made throughout the month of March in AO WALKER. During the first of the month LRP teams made several contacts and were supported by air and artillery before being extracted. The NVA/VC continued to erect occasional hasty road blocks and conduct small ambushes along Highway 19. Checkpoint along the road from An Khe to the Mang Yang Pass were harassed by random sniper fire. Light movement was constantly spotted around the Camp Radcliff perimeter and engaged with small arms fire, usually with unknown results.

Operations during the month of March were supported by on call TAC Sorties and daily FAC Sorties. Air Force fighter bombers were on call for immediate response and pre-planned air strikes were approved 90 - 95% of the time. Air Force support remained excellent. Supporting artillery (3d Bn 319th Artillery) fired a total of 1760 missions and expended 25,544 rounds. The Brigade Aviation Platoon (Casper) supported all operations. A statistical report of their activities follows:

CONFIDENTIAL

35

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

<u>UH-1H Missions</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Missions</u>
Resupply	126	126 (5 tons)
Command and Control	989	354
Maintenance	31	31
Total Hours Flown.	725	
Total Passengers	1013	

<u>OH-13S Missions</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Missions</u>
Command and Control	205	97
Maintenance	31	9
Total Hours Flown	125	
Total Passengers	95	

Grand Total Sorties UH-1H1338
 OH-13S236
 Grand Total Missions UH-1H , . . . 511
 OH-13S100

Total 7.62mm ammo expended 23,456 rounds

Operations during the month of March 1968 resulted in the following VC/NVA and friendly casualties:

<u>VC/NVA Losses</u>	<u>US Losses</u>
KIA (BC)306	KHA 65
KIA (Poss) 69	WHA224
Civil Dependents . . . 10	MHA 4
Returnses 1	Non Battle Dead 0
POW 10	Non Battle Injured . . . 5

April

The end of March saw the 173d Airborne Brigade (-) move from the Kontum area of operations to the Bong Son plains area to replace the 3d Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. The Brigade began operations with four infantry battalions under its control, the 2d Bn 503d Abn Inf, 3d Bn 503d Abn Inf, 1st Bn 50th Mech Inf and 1st Bn 14th Inf, two companies of the 1st Bn 69th Armor were under the Brigades Operational Control. Troop E 17th Cav and D Co 16th Armor (-), B and C Btry 3d Bn 319th Artillery remained under Brigade control. In addition the 41st Artillery Group provided general support with the 7th of the 13th Artillery, 7th of the 15th Artillery and the 6th of 84th Artillery providing general support reinforcing fires. The 41st ARVN Regiment also operated in conjunction with the 173d Airborne Brigade (-). On 1 April the Brigade (-) also assumed operational of Task Force 4th Bn 503d Abn Inf engaged in Operation BOLLING in Phu Yen Province.

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968 ²⁶

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

Upon assuming control of the AO the Brigade began a vigorous series of Reconnaissance in Force operations combining combat assaults by helicopters, mechanized infantry sweeps, foot patrols and cordon and search operations. Contact was light but continuous on 5 April, the tempo picked up when C Company 2d Bn 503d Inf found a small VC hospital and captured 6 NVA/VC POW's and 20 lbs of medical supplies. B Company 2d Bn 503d Inf found 8 NVA bodies and B-1-50 Inf found 3 NVA bodies on the same day. The 1st Bn 14th Inf departed LZ English for Phu Cat AFB 7 April 1968 and left Brigade control. Small contacts continued with the Brigade continuously pushing out and expanding its area of control. The enemy employed mines and booby traps resulting in several damaged APC's and some killed and wounded over a period of weeks. A Long Range Patrol Team observed 34 NVA early on the morning of 1 April and adjusted artillery fire on them with unknown results, they later made contact with an estimated enemy squad and called artillery on them until they were extracted by helicopter. The searching battalions uncovered enemy base camps and cave complexes recently occupied and abandoned by enemy units of company size strength. Numerous enemy graves were also found containing two to three bodies and abandoned enemy weapons were captured.

The three battalion task force continued reconnaissance in force missions in an effort to locate the avoiding enemy and several long range patrols were kept ranging in the operational area to locate the elusive NVA/VC. The enemy fought back with mines, booby traps and occasional mortar attacks; FSB ILLINI, the CP of the 2-503d Inf (BR 788468), received nine mortar rounds at 0030 hours on the morning of the 15th wounding four men, later in the morning LZ English's perimeter was hit by 5 to 6 mortar rounds causing negative damage. Minor damage and some US wounded continued to be caused by M113's and M-60 tanks hitting mines. All units replaced night ambushes out. 1-50th Inf joined with Popular Forces, and ARVN units in company size cordon and search missions. LRP patrols spotted small groups of enemy soldiers and called artillery fire on them.

As the 3 infantry battalions and E-17th Cav continued to conduct multi company reconnaissance in Force operations in effort to fix elements of the 3d NVA Division, contacts began to step up. On the 17th C-2-503d Inf engaged a small group of VC killing one, capturing one seriously wounded and also capturing 5 weapons. The dying POW said his unit, the 95th Bn 2d VC Regt, 3rd NVA Div was south of the contact point and one of the fleeing VC had been his political officer. C-1-50th Inf at 1125 hours occupied a village and uncovered 7 tons of rice, villagers said three VC companies had just departed to the west half an hour before. Long Range Patrols called helicopter and artillery fire on four different sightings of enemy troops resulting in 11 enemy KIA (Poss). The next day three companies of the 2-503d Inf and Camp Strike Force Company made light contact and captured an enemy printing press and documents. E-17th Cav had a 106 RR jeep destroyed by a mine, killing one US trooper and wounding three. On the 19th the 2-503d Inf uncovered in addition to many other pieces of NVA/VC equipment 80 lbs of documents some of which were marked Top Secret. These documents were evacuated. Light contact continued to be made by the advancing paratroopers and mechanized infantry, usually killing 1 or 2 of an enemy party, capturing food and small arms. LRP team called an artillery Time on Target Mission on 34+ NVA and reported screaming and yelling in the target area, also two secondary explosions.

The 2-503d Inf uncovered 7 reels of 16mm movie film (propaganda and entertainment) among other material as they searched an area of the former headquarters of the 3d NVA Division. On the 24th a CSF ambush initiated contact with an estimated NVA Co (vic BR 625703). Contact was broken immediately resulting in one CSF wounded and 3 NVA killed. The fleeing NVA abandoned 10 120mm rds, 12 82mm rds, 22 60mm rds, 7 anti tank mines, 30 B-40 rockets, 500 12.7mm rds and 5000 SA rounds. The Brigade (-) continued multi company reconnaissance in force operations as well as combined cordon and search operations with elements of the 41st ARVN Regiment.

On the 26th A-3-503d Inf heard and observed 200-300 NVA moving south through a valley (vic AR 738760). An artillery Time on Target Mission was fired with unknown results, Spooky (C-47 aircraft with mini guns) came on station an hour later and expended its ammunition in the area with unknown results. A search of the area revealed a small amount of abandoned equipment. Several contacts developed during the day by

CONFIDENTIAL

37
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

the 3-503d Inf resulting in 9 NVA KIA and 1 POW, also small arms and 82mm mortar components were captured. The 2-503d and 3-503d Inf cont. nued to find 30 to 40 bunker size enemy base camps and small food caches. 1-50th Inf continued searching villages, uncovering 4 to 5 ton rice caches, and detaining suspects who were found to run the range between VC, VC Farmer Association members, Civil Defendants to AWOL ARVN soldiers.

As the month of April ended the tempo of combined operations with allied forces increased. Company size paratrooper units worked in conjunction with Republic of Korea forces and units of the 22d Army of the Republic of Vietnam Division. Both the 2d and 3d Battalions continued to uncover fresh enemy camps and fortified positions. When contact was made with enemy troops they fled quickly to avoid contact usually only losing one to two men. The 1-50 Mechanized Infantry also discovered a battalion size tunnel complex with 7 1/2 tons of rice. The 3d Bn 503d made contact with small groups of enemy soldiers wandering around in the woods. Apparently these were members of the large group of replacements hit by the time on target fire adjusted by the 3d Bn on the 26th. PW reports indicated this replacement unit entered SVN on 16 April (after only four weeks of infantry training and no political training) and had been broken up and dispersed by the artillery fire.

In mid April the Brigade organized, equipped, and trained three 173d Airborne Brigade Advisor teams. Each five man team consist of one infantry lieutenant, one infantry NCO, one infantry, engineer and medical enlisted man. The teams have the mission of providing training to Regional Force Companies and Popular Force Platoons in the districts of Hoai An, Hoai Nhon and Phu My.

Each advisor team upon the completion of its training is placed under the senior district advisor. In addition, coordination with the South Vietnamese Province and district chief was made to gain their approval for the program. The Advisor teams will function along the lines of the MACV Combined Mobile Inspection and Training teams. Subjects taught are those recommended in the MACV Program of Instruction.

The three goals of teams are to improve the basic military skills of the RF/PF forces, improve their knowledge and use of their own weapons and equipment; and install a sense of airborne spirit into the local forces. The training cycle covers eleven days for a Regional Force Company and five days for a Popular Force Platoon. Maximum emphasis will be placed on learning by doing rather than formal instruction, on the job training while actually conducting patrols or ambushes. Limited MEDCAPS are conducted within the range of basic first aid. The entire program involves 6 RF Companies and 30 PF Platoons in Hoai Nhon, 3 RF Companies and 14 PF Platoons in Hoai An and 7 RF Companies and 27 PF Platoons in Phu My.

Additional artillery support was provided by naval gunfire from the five inch guns of such Destroyers as the USS Fletcher, USS John A. Bole and USS White River (LSMR) which patrol just off the coast. Naval gunfire liaison was provided by sub unit one, First ANGLICO made up of US Navy and Marine personnel.

The 39th Scout Dog Platoon supported the Brigade during April with 540 Scout Dog Missions in Bong Son AO, 120 missions in Tuy Hoa AO and 60 missions in the An Khe area. During these 720 Scout Dog Missions 9 early warnings were made, 5 of them called by Sgt Woodruff the handler of the Dog "Syre", and in each instance the early warning prevented an ambush. Sgt Woodruff operated with B Co 3d Bn 503d Abn Inf. Sgt Buchanan and his dog "Budda" prevented an ambush when working with D Co 3d Bn 503d Abn Inf.

Summary of Operation COCHISE: The Brigade had been looking for a home for a long time and General Schweiter had been most active in trying to bring the Brigade together. The opportunity presented itself as General Schweiter left and General Allen assumed command. It was decided by the First Field Force that the Brigade would take over Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Phu Bon Provinces in the areas of Operations WALKER, BOLLING and COCHISE. Binh Dinh Province area was to have two battalions of the 503d Infantry, Walker one battalion and Bolling one battalion. The Brigade headquarters was to operate out of LZ English near Bong Son with the 2d and 3d Battalions 503d

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MED

15 May 1968 ³⁸

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

Infantry and the 1st of the 50th (Mech) Infantry attached to the Brigade. The 1-69th Armor Battalion was also OPCON to the Brigade. The Brigade took over from 3d Brigade 4th Infantry Division which had not been very active, staying mainly to the roads which was the primary mission. They didn't go out into the so called enemy safe areas or into the mountains; they didn't go out to where everyone says "Charlie" is hiding. General Allen's concept when the Brigade first arrived was to enter these safe enemy havens. The 2d Battalion immediately went into the Tiger Mountain and the 1st Battalion 50th Infantry went into the Nui Mien Mountains. The 3d Battalion moved into the northern part of the sector. Their mission was to move out away from the base camps and try and find if the enemy was there.

The Brigade Commander decided to begin an operation to capture the 3d NVA Division Commander and eliminate the 3d NVA Division as a threat. Operation Velvet Hammer came from this. It was a combined operation with the ARVN's furnishing at least one battalion. As much artillery, air and naval gunfire support as possible was provided. The plan was to seal off the Vinh Thanh Mountain areas and move in from all sides and crush the 3d NVA Division. The enemy's 22d Regiment and 2d Regiment were operating in the area. The mission was to try to fix them and destroy them thus taking pressure off the Bong Son, Phu My area. At the same time the Brigade mounted this mission they were also tasked with other missions. The Brigade has to keep the roads open; it takes a good bit of combat power to watch the bridges, open the road and close the road with mine sweep teams, continuous surveillance over possible ambush sites and maintain reaction forces to move anywhere in three provinces. These commitments tie down a lot of combat troops. The 1-50th was assigned the mission of the roads which took away this highly mobile and fine force which has a tremendous amount of fire power and immobilized them. Velvet Hammer became an interesting operation during Phase I. The Brigade had planned to isolate one small hill mass east of the Su Loi River Valley. The paratroopers successfully pinched this place off and would have probably been successful and captured the enemy Bn but two days before the operation started a 155 artillery battalion came in and for three solid days fired into the area. When the Brigade got in the enemy had moved out. The Brigade searched out that area for a couple of days. Then it committed part of 1st Bn on the east edge of Walker AO into Cochise AO to work in towards the east with a platoon of tanks from the 1-69th Armor and CIDG forces from the Vinh Thanh LLD Camp. The 2d and 3d Bn 503d Inf were to push from separate direction towards the center of the Vinh Thanh Mountain area along the Oregon Trail (local name for a high speed trail running through the mts). One Bn of the 41st ARVN was to be employed also in this thrust. The operation was about 10 to 12 days of very little contact primarily because the enemy units in this area don't want to fight and avoided any contact, especially with US Forces, they have done so successfully since the Brigade has been in the area. Anytime the Brigade has a contact, its of short duration. The Brigade has not even run into many mortars in an area where there should be a lot of mortaring. In any case which should have caches, there are no caches, and where the enemy should have the capability to dig in and fight but they won't do this. The Brigade just searched out the Vinh Thanh Mountains and did a good job. However, the enemy may still be in there because it would take three times as many troops as the Brigade has to really search the area out. Operation Velvet Hammer closed out quietly.

The Brigade then moved LTC Hornish's 2d Bn 503d Inf to the east in the valley area where information indicated a threat to key targets in the District HQ, Route 1, a couple of training areas and successful RF Hamlets. The 3d Bn was oriented towards the north near the Ha Tay Special Forces Camp to try and cut off infiltration/exfiltration routes back into the Vinh Thanh Mt area. The enemy has successfully avoided contact with the Brigade and there are certain reasons. One reason is that this is one of the three main harvest seasons, the enemy has broken into small groups and are down in the valley helping to harvest the rice and getting their share. They are moving in small groups and scouting parties.

The Brigade is operating with a great deal of frustration in that everybody wants to find fix and destroy Charlie - but Charlie remains elusive and its bad for the morale of the troops and the officers. The Brigade although working with a young and inexperienced staff is trying new and old ideas. One current method is the Bush Master

CONFIDENTIAL

39

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

program, a series of day and night ambushes along known infiltration and exfiltration routes. The Brigade is breaking down into platoon size elements since if Charlie is going to move in small size groups the Brigade will put out small size ambushes to stop him from moving his rice or whatever he wants to do. It looks to be a long and difficult campaign in the present area of operation since the enemy doesn't really have that many forces in the area and you're not going to find the enemy in large groups. He is going to have to be reduced a little at a time. Many problems in Province control need to be solved in the future; such as how much rice do you take from a village and when. Present district policy is you leave X number kilo's of rice for each person in the village and take the rest to the district, this is not working out very well at all. The Brigade is also conducting combined operations with ARVN elements and this idea is working fairly well. The Brigade has started Advisor Teams to work with RF/FF units in an effort to increase their efficiency.

ARVN troops are also incorporated in the Brigade LRP teams and ARVN LRP teams are also being trained. The Brigade is doing everything possible to enhance the prestige of the ARVN soldier and ARVN leaders in order to give them credit for what takes place so we can gradually withdraw.

The 4th Battalion 503d Airborne Infantry and Company D (-) 16th Armor continued operations in Area of Operations BOLLING. Contact was light during the month with the enemy more intent on resupply and exercising maximum effort to avoid contact with American units. On 5 April Company B 4-503d ambushed a 15 man NVA food carrying party killing one. The company also captured 30 children age 12 years to 16 years who were engaged in food carrying operations in support of a VC Bn. Elements of the 47th ARVN Regiment made heavy contact with 2 NVA Bn's at Ma Hoa Village (vic CQ 095 430) in Tuy Hoa Valley just off Highway 7B above the Song Dai Giang River. D Co (-) 16th Armored stood by in a supporting role. The enemy forces continued to avoid contact through mid April when C Company 4th Bn 503d Inf made contact with an estimated NVA/VC Company on the 17th, airstrikes and artillery supported. One enemy body was found and 1 AK-47 and 1 81mm mortar were captured. Using Kit Carson Scouts (former NVA soldiers hired and trained by the Brigade S5) C Company uncovered an enemy base camp under construction. A and C Company continued searching the area on the 19th and uncovered more enemy dead from the 17th. Light contact occurred during the day resulting in half a dozen enemy killed and weapons captured. The reconnaissance in Force Missions continued with small discoveries of enemy ammunition and food. A Company chasing a single VC in the vic of BQ 991573 located several huts, a classroom and hospital area along with a small amount of enemy equipment. All was destroyed. With the continued assistance of the Kit Carson Scouts A Company located another enemy company size area complete with building material on the 25th. Both A and C Companies found evidence during the remainder of the month that the VC/NVA were fleeing before them. The searching paratroopers killed several stragglers and took two prisoners but the main enemy forces exerted their main effort to avoid contact with Lieutenant Colonel David L. Buckner's 4th Battalion 503d Airborne Infantry.

The 1st Bn 503d Infantry under the command of Major Raymond E. Gunderson continued to perform its assigned missions in the Camp Radcliff/Walker area of operations. The Quick Strike Battalion (temporary designation of the infantry Bn located at Camp Radcliff) mission continued to be the responsibility for the defense of Camp Radcliff with three Provisional Companies drawn from each of the major tenant units located at Camp Radcliff in An Khe: 173d Airborne Support Bn, rear elements of the 1st Cavalry Division and elements of the Qui Nhon area command. The 1st Bn also mans the Camp Tactical Operations Center and keeps a one company reaction force standing by for any emergency in AO Walker. Two companies conducted reconnaissance in force missions in AO Walker and up until 0600 hours 10 April the 1st Bn also had the security of Highway 19 between checkpoints 18 (west of the An Khe pass) and checkpoint 27 (east of Man Yang Pass). The security of Highway 19 required the resources of one infantry company to occupy checkpoints and secure bridges along the route. On 10 April the 1st Bn 69th Armor (under the operational control of the 173d Airborne Brigade from the 4th Infantry Division) became responsible for the highway security mission. The 1st Bn 503d Infantry was still required to place one infantry company under the control of the 1st Bn 69th Armor to maintain security of the checkpoints and bridge sites.

33

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

40

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

Meanwhile intelligence sources had indicated that Highway 19 would be ambushed by a Bn of the 95th B NVA Regiment. In preparation the 1st Bn 503d Infantry and 1st Bn 69th Armor were alerted. In close coordination with the 1st Bn 69th Armor Major Gurderson made plans to allow the NVA to attempt to execute their ambush and then react with all forces and fire power available. The ambush was triggered by a patrolling BOD team which spotted and started to disarm an unexploded 105 round. The NVA prematurely executed their ambush and set off a command mine. The waiting US forces reacted immediately A Company 1st Bn 503d Inf and 2 companies (minus) (2 platoons per company) of the 1st Bn 69th Armor swept the area in the vicinity of the exploded mine. They encounter numerous groups of NVA soldiers attempting to withdraw to the North. The NVA countered with mortar fire against Fire Support Base Schuller and checkpoint 25 but American artillery, helicopter gunships, TAC fighter bombers and elements of B Troop 7th of the 17th Cav came in to support the contact. The 5th Bn 95th B NVA Regiment fled north leaving 46 dead and 4 prisoners behind.

On 14 April two full rifle companies and one company (-) deployed from the edge of AO Walker into AO Cochise to participate in Operation Velvet Hammer with the mission of conducting reconnaissance in force and providing security for Operation Scrape, which consisted of three bull dozers which were trying to make a passable road out of the Oregon Trail. (The Oregon Trail is the scenic name given to a boulder and rock infested high speed trail which runs from near the Vinh Thanh LIDE Camp over the Binh Dinh Mountains). The paratroopers made only very light contact and encountered some enemy booby traps. Due to preparation for the suspected and highly touted NVA/VC 2d general offensive project Scrape was scrapped and the troops returned to AO Walker on 30 April.

Indications are the enemy will start another phase of his offensive which will probably affect AO Walker in the following manner: Short but sharp mortar attacks against Camp Radcliff; increased harassment of Highway 19 and ground attacks against isolated outpost. Reasoning behind these courses of action are: The enemy's open statements that this is what he's going to do and an increased effort to insure a better bargaining position for the proposed peace talks.

Operations during the month of April were supported by on call and preplanned TAC Sorties and daily FAC Sorties. Supporting artillery (3d Bn 319th Artillery) fired a total of 1818 missions and expended 15,591 rounds. Excellent aviation support for the Brigade during April came from LTC Marion C. Englands 10th Aviation Bn. In the Bong Son area the 61st Aviation Company furnished 12 slicks (UH-1B) and 5 gunships daily to the Brigade while the 196th Aviation Company also provided direct support to the paratroopers with 6 hooks (CH-47). In An Khe the 134th Aviation Company provided direct support with 4 slicks and 2 gunships, while the 180th Aviation Company supported operations in Tuy Hoa with 2 hooks. The Brigade Aviation Platoon (Casper) supported all operations. A statistical report of their activities follows:

<u>UH-1B Missions</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Missions</u>
Resupply	255	60 (4 tons)
Command and Control	241	125
Maintenance	23	12
Total Hours Flown	710	
Total Passengers	269	

<u>OH-6A Missions</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Missions</u>
Command, Recon and Control	198	53
Maintenance	15	4
Total Hours Flown	126	
Total Passengers	15	

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

Grand Total Sorties UH-1H 519
 OH-6A 213
 Grand Total Missions UH-1H 197
 OH-6A 57

Total 7.62mm ammo expended 50,427 rounds

Operations during the month of April 1968 resulted in the following VC/ NVA and friendly casualties:

<u>VC/NVA Losses</u>	<u>US Losses</u>
KIA (BC) 140	KHA 10
KIA (Poss) 49	WHA 83
Civil Dependents 57	MHA 1
Returns 3	Non Battle Dead 5
POW 18	Non Battle Injured. 27

42

AVEE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

5. Training:

a. During the reporting period the 173d Airborne Brigade continued to conduct jungle warfare training of newly arrived replacements. In the past three months the Brigade Jungle School has had the extra responsibility of training replacements for a newly attached battalion to the 173d Airborne Brigade. The jungle school has continued to stress to personnel how important the care and maintenance of the M-16 rifle is and now included in the training schedule for each class is the care and maintenance of the M-16 rifle. These weapons maintenance classes are held after normal classes are over and are supervised by jungle school cadre. Also added since the last reporting period is a visit from the Chaplain who holds services for the newly arrived personnel. A breakdown of personnel trained by month follows:

(1) February 5 Officers 238 Enlisted Men
and an additional 161 enlisted men from other units.

(2) March 16 Officers 761 Enlisted Men
and an additional 43 enlisted men from other units.

(3) April 42 Officers 851 Enlisted Men
and an additional 27 enlisted men from other units.

b. Lieutenant Harry H. Hillman took over as commandant of the Brigade's Jungle School on 5 March 1968.

c. Depending upon the number of personnel in each class, the weekly field operation includes an airmobile assault.

43
CONFIDENTIAL

AVHE-SC/MJD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

6. Psychological Operations and Civic Action

a. February:

(1) Civic Actions:

- (a) MEDCAP: 1,838 (Phu Yen and Binh Dinh Province)
- (b) 16,380 pounds of captured rice returned to GVN control.
- (c) 15 rolls of concertina wire donated to Christian Missionary in Tuy Hoa City.

(2) Construction: Repaired 1 bridge and upgraded four kilometers of road and also blasted channel for waterway.

(3) Psychological Operations: A total of 400,000 leaflets were dropped in the Brigade AO during the month and approximately 80 minutes of Psychological Operation tapes were played in conjunction with the leaflet drops.

b. March:

(1) Psychological Operations:

- (a) 9,890,000 leaflets were dropped in Brigade AO.
- (b) 3 hours and 40 minutes of loudspeaker tapes.

c. April:

(1) Civic Actions:

- (a) MEDCAP: 2627 patients treated
- (b) Food: 7,500 lbs
- (c) Clothing: 525 lbs
- (d) Lumber: 24,000 Bd Ft
- (e) Agriculture tools: 20 shovels, picks, etc.
- (f) School Kits: 500
- (g) Captured rice distributed: 74 tons

(2) Psychological Operations:

- (a) 10,702,500 leaflets were dropped in AO.
- (b) 147 loudspeaker missions flown totaling 50 hours and 30 min,
- (c) Four quick reaction missions were conducted this month. The 173d Airborne Brigade is credited with 2 Hoi Chanh's that rallied to maneuver battalions within the AO.

7. Logistics: During the reporting period, the Brigade's logistical capabilities have been required to be continuously split three ways and furnish logistical support to the DAK TO/KONTUM area, AN KHE area, TUY HOA area and later in the BONG SONG area of operations. The logistical posture continues to remain excellent. Tactical operations were supported by air and land lines of supply. A logistical summary by classes of supply is furnished by month in Inclosure 3.

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

44
15 May 1968

8. Personnel and Administration:

a. General: The Brigade personnel posture is good at this time with line battalions only short an average of 10 EM per battalion. Over-all the Brigade is over 181 EM; however, certain MOS skills are short due to the Brigade being over in MOS 11B's. The shortages are:

<u>MOS</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTH</u>	<u>ASG</u>	<u>SHORT</u>
11C1P	Inf Indirect Fire Crewman	263	114	149
12A1P	Pioneer	40	29	11
13B2P	Field Artillery Crewman	71	58	13
36K2P	Field Wireman	171	130	41
43E2P	Parachute Rigger	70	49	21
62B2P	Engineer Equipment Repairman	15	8	7
62E2P	Construction Machine Operator	25	10	15
71B3P	Clerk Typist	38	12	26
76A1P	Supply Man	52	28	24
76P2P	Stock Control & Acct Spec	41	26	15
76Y3P	Unit & Org Supply	<u>27</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>10</u>
TOTAL		813	481	332

Casualty fill action is good though limited. Fills are made from an airborne replacement pool that is maintained at 22d Replacement Battalion and 90th Replacement Battalion. The infusion problem at this time is limited to the 1st Bn, 50th Inf (Mech), that was attached to the Brigade on 5 April 1968. Action has been taken to infuse approximately 200 personnel. Headquarters USARV is controlling this infusion program.

b. Personnel

(1) Brigade Casualties:

	<u>Battle Casualties</u>			<u>Non-Battle Casualties</u>	
	<u>KIA</u>	<u>MIA</u>	<u>DLI</u>	<u>DEAD</u>	<u>INJURED</u>
February	22	92	1	0	15
March	68	231	4	0	0
April	<u>10</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>28</u>
TOTAL	100	412	6	5	43

(2) Brigade Strength:

CONFIDENTIAL

45
AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

AUTHORIZED AND ASSIGNED STRENGTH

	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>				<u>ASG 1 FEB 68</u>				<u>ASG 30 APR 68</u>			
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>AGG</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>AGG</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>AGG</u>
Assigned Units ¹	333	33	5581	5747	315	43	4897	5255	350	39	5199	5588
Attached Units ²	37	1	900	938	13	2	40	55	31	2	815	848
Aggregate	370	34	6281	6685	328	45	4937	5310	381	41	6014	6436

GAINS AND LOSSES BY MONTH

	<u>FEBRUARY 1968</u>				<u>MARCH 1968</u>				<u>APRIL 1968</u>			
	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>AGG</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>AGG</u>	<u>OFF</u>	<u>WO</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>AGG</u>
Gains ³	19	2	189	210	46	4	741	791	118	4	1951	2073
Losses ⁴	31	1	583	615	41	3	628	672	43	4	446	493
NET	-12	+1	-394	-405	+5	+1	+113	+119	+75	0	+1505	+1580

¹During the reported period the assigned units authorized strength increased. The increase was due to the 74th Inf Det (LFP) being activated and assigned as of 5 Feb 1968 with an authorized strength of 2 Officers and 59 EM; 75th Inf Det (CBT Tracker) being activated and assigned as of 27 Feb 1968 with an authorized strength of 10 EM; the 1st, 2d and 4th Bns, 503d Inf were reorganized as of 2 Apr 1968 under the "T" series MTOE with an authorized strength increase of 6 Officers and 121 EM. The 3d Bn, 503 Inf was reorganized as of 2 Apr 1968 under the "T" series MTOE with an authorized strength increase of 7 Officers and 104 EM. The 3d Bn, 319th Arty was authorized an increased strength of 5 Officers and 11 EM as of 23 Mar 1968. The 172d MI Det being changed from attached to assigned on 1 Feb 1968 with authorized strength of 9 Officers, 2 WO, 21 EM; the 51st Chem Det being changed from attached to assigned on 1 Feb 1968 with an authorized strength of 1 Officer and 4 EM; the 24th Mil Hist Det being changed from attached to assigned on 1 Feb 1968 with an authorized strength of 1 Officer and 1 EM; the 45th APU being changed from attached to assigned the 45th APU being changed from attached to assigned on 1 Feb 1968 with an authorized strength of 1 Officer and 8 EM.

²During the reported period the attached units authorized strength had an overall increase. The attached units authorized strength decreased due to the change in status of the 172d MI Det, the 51st Chem Det, the 24th Mil Hist Det, and the 45th APU mentioned in 1 above. The attached units authorized strength increased due to the 1st Bn, 50th Inf (Mech) with an authorized strength of 37 Officers, 1 WO and 881 EM being attached as of 6 Apr 1968 and the 54th Inf Det (GS) with an authorized strength of 19 EM being attached as of 7 Mar 1968. The overall increase of attached strength was 25 Officers and 866 EM, with a decrease of 1 WO.

³Represents all assigned gains to include both in-country and out-country and the attachment of the 1st Bn, 50th Inf (Mech).

⁴Represents all assigned losses to include DENOS, ETS, in-country reassignment, deceased members, and out-country MEDEVAC.

(3) Key Personnel Losses and Gains: Key personnel losses and gains, to include principal heads of staff sections, special staff sections, and battalion commanders were:

CONFIDENTIAL

46

AVBE-SC/MHD
 SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968

LOSSES

- Col Powers - DOD
- Maj Johnson - Bde Engr Off
- Maj Enslow - Bde Sig Off
- Maj Brewer - Bde PIO Off
- Maj Edwards - Bde Fin Off
- Maj Schvaneveldt - Bde Sup Off
- Maj Glasker - Bde Maint Off
- Maj Guindon - CO, 51st Chem Det

GAINS

- Maj Reeves - Bde Avn Off
- Maj Anderson - Bde Fin Off
- Maj Sharber - Asst Bde S3
- Maj Goetzke - Bde Maint Off

(4) Awards and Decorations: There were a total of 2,188 awards for valor and meritorious service during the reporting period. A breakdown follows.

APPROVED AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

	<u>February</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
Distinguished Service Cross	4	3	0
Silver Star	27	32	1
Legion of Merit	3	1	2
Distinguished Flying Cross	1	0	0
Bronze Star Medal (Valor)	76	88	159
Bronze Star Medal (Merit/Achievement)	104	152	260
Air Medal (Valor)	0	0	0
Air Medal (Service)	10	26	65
Soldiers Medal	6	3	0
Army Commendation Medal (Valor)	42	20	80
Army Commendation Medal (Merit/Achievement)	101	119	208
Purple Heart	<u>39</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>390</u>
TOTAL	413	610	1,165

c. Discipline, Law and Order

(1) The discipline in the Brigade has been excellent during the reporting period. No stragglers were reported.

(2) During this quarter there were 4 General Court Martials, 49 Special Court Martials, 8 Summary Court Martials and 360 Article 15's.

(3) Assistance from the Brigade IG was readily available throughout the reporting period.

47
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

(4) There were 332 Legal Assistance Cases processed during the quarter.

d. Development and Maintenance of Morale:

(1) Morale within the Brigade remained excellent due to increased and improved services and facilities.

(2) Finance: The Brigade Finance Section (Company "A", Administration) continued to provide financial support throughout the reporting period. Newly arrived replacements were made aware of the Soldiers Saving Program and the various allotments available to them through orientation and various newsletters.

(3) Chaplain: During the reporting period there were 797 religious services conducted (all faiths with a total attendance of 18,922).

e. Administrative Services:

(1) Postal Services:

(a) Postal service was good with incoming mail being received on 29 out of 30 days. The average days in transmission of mail from San Francisco to actual recipient at field locations were 7 days. Outgoing mail was dispatched on 30 out of 30 days. The average days in transmission of mail from sender to the APO in San Francisco were 5 days.

(b) Mail processed (pounds).

1. Received - 57,818 lbs - Daily average - 1,927 lbs.

2. Dispatched - 32,927 lbs - Daily average - 1,097 lbs.

(c) Total amount of money orders sold - \$262,492.18.

(d) Total amount of stamps sold - \$6,212.00.

(2) Special Services Activities: The Special Services program is at present under expansion with R & R being the big attraction during the month of April.

(a) Number of Movies - 112

(b) Number of TV Series - 18

(c) Number of Film Accounts - (Approved & Active) - 11

(d) Welfare Fund: An Khe Central Post Fund - 11T Caudle,

Custodian

(e) USO Shows - (3) Fess Parker Handshake Tour; RFD Hollywood Show (Country & Western); The Peter Leeds Show

(f) Number of In-Country R & R and Out-Of-Country R & R allocations available:

1. Vung Tau - 369

2. Out-of-Country: (Feb, Mar & Apr) = 1,365

3. Break out by month of April only:

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

48
15 May 1968

AVEE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

	<u>AUTHORIZED</u>	<u>USED</u>
HAWAII	96	96
HONG KONG	42	42
AUSTRALIA	38	37
PENANG	20	20
SINGAPORE	19	19
BANGKOK	73	73
TAIPEI	52	52
TOKYO	28	28
KUALA LUMPUR	7	7
MANILA	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	384	383

(g) Reading Material Distributed by Number: (April only)

1. Magazines - 500
2. Paperback Books - 832
2. Army Times - 1200

AVEE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

9. Chemical Operations: The 51st Chemical Detachment of the 173d Airborne Brigade provided chemical support on a standby basis whenever requested by elements of the Brigade. The following missions were accomplished:

a. Herbicide Missions:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>METHOD</u>	<u>AREA</u>	<u>TARGET</u>	<u>SORTLES</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
14 Feb 68	UH-1	QL 19	Ambush Sites	2	80 Gal
18 Feb 68	Agavenco	BQ 8064 BQ 8068 BQ 8184 BQ 8168 BQ 7969	Rice		110 Gal
24 Feb 68	Hand Sprayer	QL 19	Check Points		10 Gal
17 Feb 68	Hand Sprayer	QL 19	Check Points		30 Gal
23 Apr 68	C-123		Tiger Mountain	1	UNK

b. Flame Throwers:

(1) On 24 March 1968, 3/503 Infantry encountered bunker positions on Hill 600, vic ZA 151 958. A flamethrower was used to destroy the two bunker positions, resulting in two enemy KIA.

(2) On 25 March 1968, the flamethrower was again used resulting in one bunker destroyed and two enemy KIA.

c. Riot Control Agent CS:

(1) On 30 January 1968, D Company, 4th Battalion 503d Infantry used the Tactical CS Launcher E-8 in the combat assault against a well emplaced enemy at Tuy Hoa North, Phu Yen Province, RVN. D Company had placed five E-8's ranging from 50 to 200 meters from the target area. A good cloud of CS was achieved for 20 seconds which permitted the troops to advance to the outer edge of the objective. 30 enemy fled the village and gunships followed resulting in 30 KIA. Due to lapse conditions 1 to 2 minutes after the attack, the enemy had recovered sufficiently to begin firing again.

(2) A CS-1 (micro-pulverized) bag drop was flown on 8 February 1968 using a UH-1 helicopter. 100 8 pound bags were dropped on a bunker complex (vic BQ 9850). The objective of the drop was to restrict the use of these bunkers to the enemy.

(3) Eight E-8 CS launchers were positioned around the perimeter at Camp Radcliff, An Khe.

(4) The 51st Chemical Detachment supported D/16th Armor with two Mity Mites and CS hand grenades to flush a tunnel complex vic CQ 066 454.

(5) On 2 April 1968 bulk CS (micropulverized) was used in a tunnel denial and destruction mission vic BR 779 937. The entrances were closed after seeding the tunnels.

(6) On 20 April 1968 four E-158's were used to deny caves and crevices to the enemy vic BR 752 651. This was followed up the next day by 25 eight pound bags of CS which were dropped from an altitude of 1700 feet. These were dropped on the location of a major base camp.

(7) On 26 April 1968 four E-158's were dropped on a suspected daytime hiding position of VC vic BR 900 786.

CONFIDENTIAL

AVHE-SC/MMD
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

15 May 1968 ⁵⁰

(8) On 29 April 1968 ten E-158's were employed in support of the 3rd Battalion, 503d Infantry around Hill 342 in Hoai An District, Binh Dinh Province. The E-158's were dropped from 2000 feet and set for an altitude of burst of 1500 feet. The CS cloud covered approximately 300 meters and gave good coverage of the target prior to lifting.

(9) On 30 April 1968 the 51st Chemical Detachment made a CS bag drop vic BR 696 083 to BR 696 071. Fifty 8 pound bags with blasting caps were dropped on a major enemy base camp and way station to deny the terrain to the enemy.

d. Personnel Detector Program:

(1) One MPD and operator were at An Khe at the beginning of February 1968 to support the 3/503d Infantry in Operation DAZZLEM.

(2) One MPD supported the 4/503d Infantry in Operation BOLLING at Phu Hiep.

(3) On 7 February 1968 the APD and one MPD were sent with the Brigade to Pleiku to support the 1/503d Infantry and 2/503d Infantry.

(4) The APD and MPD were used to support the 1/503d Infantry and the 2/503d Infantry in the vicinity of Ban Me Thout during the period 15-28 February 1968.

(5) On 23 February 1968 the MPD located at An Khe was flown in support of the Capital ROK Division.

(6) The APD and MPD were used to support the 1/503d Infantry and the 3/503d Infantry in the vicinity of Kontum during the period 29 February - 13 March 1968.

(7) On 23 March 1968 at BR 289 515 the MPD aircraft received heavy readings and ground fire resulting in one US WIA.

(8) On 24 March 1968 the MPD aircraft again received heavy fire resulting in one US WIA. Gunships suppressed the area in both cases with unknown results.

(9) The APD supported Task Force 173d Brigade at LZ English during April 1968. One MPD remained at An Khe in support of the 1/503d Infantry and one MPD was located at Phu Hiep in support of the 4/503d Infantry.

(10) On 27 April a major base camp was found by the 3rd Battalion, 503d Infantry. The bunker complex was 1-2 weeks old. The APD had recorded heavy reading over the area on 16-18 April and artillery had immediately been fired.

e. Fougasse mines:

(1) 26 fougasse mines were placed around the perimeter at Camp Radcliff, An Khe.

(2) 10 additional mines were placed on the Camp Radcliff perimeter on 24 February 1968.

(3) On 5 March 1968 ten additional mines were emplaced on the perimeter at Camp Radcliff for a total of 46 mines.

(4) On 20 April 1968 the 51st Chemical assisted in the placement of 28 fougasse mines around FSB Illind.

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

II. Commander's Observations and Recommendations:

During the operational period, various lessons were learned. These lessons learned were drawn from all the operations which occurred during the period extending from 1 February 1968 through 30 April 1968.

A. Operations

1. OBSERVATION: Enemy Use of Trails: In the Brigade AO the enemy continues to use the same general lines of drift, apparently unable to change routes based on previous contacts with strong Brigade Forces. Paragraphs below describe one exploitation of this weakness.

EVALUATION & RECOMMENDATION: Airborne Personnel Detector: In the Brigade AO, as well as elsewhere in Vietnam, detection of the enemy location is a prime problem. In addition, in this AO, there is constant movement of small groups of the enemy along fairly well defined routes. Since the Brigade can not provide forces in every location, the Brigade began early in April to give priority each day to aircraft needed to support the airborne personnel detector. This program combined with use of artillery or air within a matter of minutes after heavy readings has proved effective. Although Allied Forces can not investigate each firing with ground troops, we have found ample evidence that the system is working i.e., destroyed bunkers, abandoned packs and evidence of casualties.

Bushmaster - Stay Behind Forces: During the month of April, the Brigade began a deliberate program of leaving stay-behind platoons along enemy lines of movement. When a battalion was moved out of a particular area, a platoon or platoons were left behind with 7 to 10 days supply, the stock of supplies being provided to preclude the give-away resulting from frequent visits by helicopters. These platoons have not only provided significant intelligence but have also caused numerous casualties for the enemy to include prisoners.

2. OBSERVATION: Use of APD along highways:

EVALUATION: The employment of APD aircraft proved effective in early morning highway surveillance. In conjunction with APD flights, an artillery aerial observer, flying in close proximity to the snoopy aircraft, should be immediately available to call artillery fires on heavy APD readings.

RECOMMENDATION: As noted in evaluation.

3. OBSERVATION: Use of RF/PF to augment US ambush activities enhances the Allies enthusiasm and esprit.

EVALUATION: Close coordination with Popular Forces and combined operations builds enthusiasm and esprit within the indigenous forces. Planned ambushes augmented with Popular Forces South of An Khe proved highly successful. Enemy incidents along the Southern Camp Radcliff perimeter were stopped. The local populace of An Khe credited these ambushes with preventing the enemy from attacking An Khe during the TET offensive.

RECOMMENDATION: Close coordination with RF/PF Units.

4. OBSERVATION: Clearing Fields of Fire.

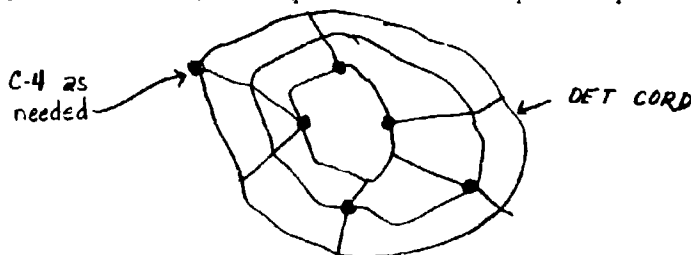
EVALUATION: An expedient method of clearing underbrush in thickly vegetated areas is the employment of det cord and composition C-4. The area to be cleared is prepared with concentric "ring mains" of det cord. Large shrubs and trees are further prepared with C-4. The result is a pattern of det cord and C-4 shaped something like a spoked wheel. (See Figure 1). Once in place, the ring main is detonated clearing the desired area.

15 May 1968 52

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

RECOMMENDATION: This technique tends to blow away secondary growth at chest level. Its other advantage is that it allows personnel to shape the area to be cleared to conform to the shape of the defensive position perimeter.



5. OBSERVATION: Insertion of LRP Stay Behind Elements.

EVALUATION: An excellent technique employed to cover the insertion of LRP Teams is to insert them at the same moment that an extraction is initiated. The same ships used to lift out a unit also carry in the LRP team.

RECOMMENDATION: LRP teams inserted in this fashion provide some security for the last flight of extraction aircraft. It is an opportune time to enter the AO undetected and ambush or observe enemy scavengers. This technique further reduces the requirement for additional C & C ships and gunships if the team were to be inserted separately.

6. OBSERVATION: Destruction of the BA 386 Battery.

EVALUATION: An effective method of completely rendering a BA 386 Battery unusable is to break the terminal socket out of the container and cross the wires to create a short. This technique will burn up the cells over a short period of time and effectively destroy the battery with minimal effort.

RECOMMENDATION: This technique is more effective than breaking or cutting up the battery as it renders all cells unserviceable and an additional advantage of this technique is that the heat generated during this process is usually sufficient enough to dry at least one pair of socks.

7. OBSERVATION: Destruction of Brass, Ammo Cans, and other metal refuse.

EVALUATION: When required to dispose of brass, ammo cans, and other metal refuse, a technique that will destroy this material and deny its use to the enemy is to use a thermite grenade. A hole approximately three feet deep is dug with an opening large enough to accommodate the largest item to be destroyed. The thermite grenade is ignited and placed on top of the trash. As the grenades burn, it burns through the metal items causing them to melt and burn.

RECOMMENDATION: This technique results in the complete destruction of the material, leaving the enemy no opportunity to recover the metal items. This technique is much quicker and effective than other methods of destruction.

B. Logistics

1. OBSERVATION: Frequent unnecessary deployment of BSOC and unit trains seriously disrupted the supply system which hampered continuous support to the combat units. One such move was from Kontum to Plei Mrong.

EVALUATION: The BSOC Commander must continuously keep the Brigade Commander informed as to the Support limitations which will result from redeployment.

53
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

15 May 1968

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

RECOMMENDATION: Unless it is absolutely necessary to relocate, the BSOC should support by use of contact teams and its Hook capabilities from a centralized support element.

2. OBSERVATION: The Support Battalion TO&I does not provide sufficient personnel and equipment to adequately support combat operations in more than two locations without augmentation. During periods of this quarter the Support Battalion has been called upon to provide support in up to four (4) locations simultaneously. This has caused problems in the Supply and Maintenance area.

EVALUATION: The Brigade Commander and staff should be kept advised as to Support Battalion's capabilities to adequately support separate combat operations.

RECOMMENDATION: The maneuver battalions must be called upon to provide greater assistance in self supporting during limited independent operations.

C. Lessons Learned in Infantry Operations; submitted by PFC S. W. Pscherer, 3d Platoon, Company A, 3d Bn, 503d Inf, 113d Airborne Brigade.

1. When in an AC company size elements are too often given a movement order to establish a Lager site on very high ground a lengthy distance from the previous evenings perimeter. This necessitates a company size move with rucksacks over what is usually dense terrain. As a result a day is spent with no opportunity to successfully search & destroy the low ground at the base of mountainous terrain where enemy activity is most usually centered. All indications and actual finds backed up by concurrent elimination of crops, caches, and base camps are found in easily accessible but canopy hidden areas near low ground and if possible close by or on a readily available source of water. In our observations the VC and NVA use streams as reference points for their comrades to locate them and join forces. Hence all base areas and straggling or concentrated groups of enemy are found on either side of a stream, usually the wider sections of water. Hospitals will always be found on a stream. Hospitals desperately need large amounts of water and therefore must locate on a suitable locality. To sum this up, too much time is spent on moving to high ground on a route where contact with the enemy is unlikely.

2. In recent operations an effort has been made to supply the infantry company with a 5 day subsistence capability. This is good. Lack of helicopter resupply orbiting and then landing in a friendly occupied area enhances greatly the ability to remain out of the enemy's constant observance. The intelligent and combat trained enemy could learn much about size and capability and morale of the American infantry unit merely by counting the number of sorties the resupply chopper flies and in many instances what the chopper contains. One welcome and beneficial change would be to have 50% LRRP rations and 50% Combat C-rations. This would make for a lighter, smaller load and would also decrease the possibility of poor police of the battlefield.

3. Each squad size element should carry at least one D-handle shovel for digging in at night. Experience shows it to be much better and not that difficult to carry since often it is an asset when being used as a crutch or support for the carrier when ascending steep terrain. Rope should be carried for use as a binding for prisoners, a trip-pull for possible booby traps, rappelling, etc. Each man should carry 25 sandbags.

4. On combat assault operations into an unestablished LZ, assault personnel when in helicopters other than the Chinook should have rucksacks in a position to enable quick "kick-off" of the individual rucksack just prior to each individual exiting. There have been instances when the chopper must hover 5-12 feet over the LZ because of tall elephant grass or many stumps. This is very dangerous for a combat trooper when he must leap out at such a height with a heavy rucksack on his back. A secure perimeter would be established more quickly and safely by this method.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned

54
15 May 1968

5. RTO's should carry their radio so it is camouflaged by some means. This can be accomplished by covering it over when on the rucksack and when possible by bending the aerial down through the frame of the rucksack when the particular operator knows his communications are but a short distance away. Preferable to me is by carrying the radio in a demolition bag hung around the neck with the radio resting on the front left of the individual. This keeps the radio easily accessible at all times when patrols drop rucksacks and cloverleaf, balances weight on the body, and ironically protects a vulnerable section of the body.

6. weapons maintenance and ideal weapons are always foremost in the combat trooper's mind. Where the slip-up is I do not know but there is always a shortage of cleaning equipment which makes for increasing expediency in finding materials with which to clean. Steps should be taken to insure that every man if possible have a full cleaning kit for his weapon. This includes wrenches for the machine gun crews. Line companies are crying for more M79 shotgun adapters due to dense terrain in which many times an M79 is rendered useless. At least 2 shotguns per platoon would be ideal.

7. Claymore mines should have a sandbag behind to take some of the backblast with the wire wound around the mine and legs and stretched tightly to the position with the end leading under a sandbag to keep it tight. Only 2 inches of the wire plus the detonator should be visible on the trooper's side of the sandbag. If the enemy attempts to turn the mine the 2 inches visible to the guard on position will move. Many times the enemy will hurl grenades inside a friendly perimeter. Often 9 out of 10 objects heard hitting the ground are rocks. The combat trooper must stay composed. If all positions have plenty of grenades they should retaliate with a few grenades of their own and M&I fire with M79's. A Starlite Scope that is functioning properly is an immense help.

8. When a long distance from a village, the finding of planted crops, be it small gardens or an acre of rice, will result in the discovery of one or several hooches. Although usually close by, which ordinarily means observing the terrain around the crop and then searching the thickest stand of vegetation and trees around the crop until discovery of the hooches, sometimes the hooches are quite a distance, 300-700 meters distant. Upon finding a recent crop of some sort it is always wise to make an extensive search of all outlying area. Nothing pleases the combat trooper more, except for actual contact and elimination of the enemy, than finding and destroying the enemy's provisions, shelters, or discovering caches of ammunition, grenades, mortar rounds, rockets, weapons, etc. When found in a well hidden area morale of the trooper surges up 100% and definitely undermines the enemy.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

55

AVFA-GC-OT (15 May 68) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report of 173d Airborne Brigade for Period
Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

DA, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, APO 96350 18 JUN 1968

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam,
ATTN: AVHGC-DST, APO 96375


(C) This headquarters has evaluated subject report and concurs.
The following comments are made for clarification.

a. Reference paragraph 3a(1)(a)1, page 3: During the reporting period, the H15 LF VC Battalion was located southeast of Pleiku City, while the 4th Battalion, 95B NVA Regiment was situated west, not south of the city. This headquarters has no evidence to support the statement that the Headquarters 95B Regiment was located south of the city.

b. Reference paragraph 3a(2)(a)3f, page 9: Tuy An and Hieu Xuong Districts are located in the BOLLING AO and not the COCHISE AO.

c. Reference paragraph A2 Section II page 45: Use of Airborne Personnel Detector (APD) along highways. The technique described is being used by artillery units to acquire and attack targets in a timely manner. The location of a heavy APD reading is marked by dropping a smoke grenade from the snoop aircraft immediately followed by the aerial observer taking the target under artillery fire.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


ROBERT C. GABBARD
ILT, AGC
ASST ADJUTANT GENERAL

Copies furnished:
2 - ACSFOR, DA, Wash DC 20310
1 - 173d Abn Bde

CONFIDENTIAL

49

56

AVHGC-DST (15 May 68) 2d Ind CPT Arnold/dls/LBN 4485
SUBJECT: Operational Report Lessons Learned (1 February - 30 April 1968)

HEADQUARTERS, US ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96375 23 JUN 1968

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-DT,
APO 96558

1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1968 from Headquarters, 173d Airborne Brigade.

2. Concur with report as submitted.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

C. S. Nakatsukasa
C. S. NAKATSUKASA
Captain, AGC
Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:
HQ I FFORCEV
HQ 173d Abn Bde

CONFIDENTIAL

57

GPOP-DT (15 May 68) 3d Ind (C)

SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 173d Abn Bde for Period Ending
30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 15 JUL 1968

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

1. (U) This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forwarding indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.
2. (C) For clarification, reference 1st Indorsement, subparagraph a: During early February, the 4th Battalion, 95B VNA Regiment was identified as the unit contacted in the area of Pleiku City by the US 1/69 Armor Battalion and the ARVN 3d Armored Cavalry Squadron. At three times, the 5th Battalion, 95B NVA Regiment was reportedly located 10 kilometers east of Camp Enari (AR 787324). The reported mission of the 95B Regiment was the interdiction of Route 19 between Pleiku and An Khe. Considering the mission of the 95B NVA Regiment, it is probable that its headquarters moved into a position south of Pleiku to control the operations of its battalions.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

C. C. Shortt
C. C. SHORTT
CPT, AGC
Asst AG

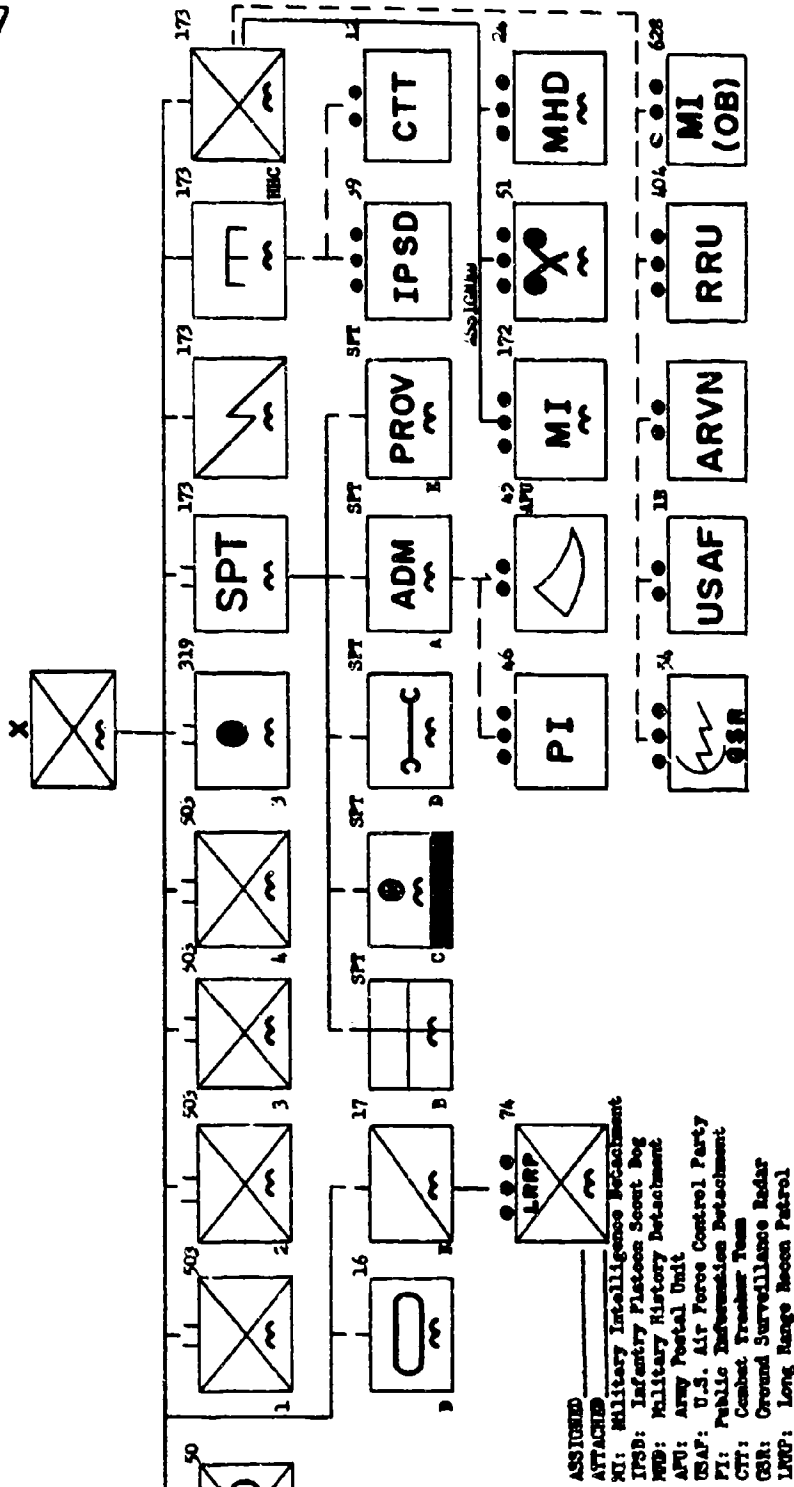
31

CONFIDENTIAL

ORGANIZATION: 173d Airborne Brigade

59

Incl 2



52

6d
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Supply and Combat Service Activities

15 May 1968

1. February:

a. Supply:

(1) Class I: Rations were supplied to the Brigade from four (4) locations during the month. Elements of the Brigade in the Bolling AO drew from the Tuy Hoa Sub Area Command ration breakdown point. Elements operating in the vicinity of Pleiku drew from the Pleiku Sub Area. Elements operating in Ban Me Thuot area drew rations from a Class I point operated by the 173d BSOC. Base Camp elements plus the Quick Strike Battalion drew rations from the An Khe Class I supply point. Main problem areas were lack of refrigeration storage for perishable subsistence, and shortage of aircraft to transport rations.

(2) Class II & IV: Class II support was furnished to all Brigade units from An Khe Base Camp by shipment by road convoy and air shipment. The fill on requisitions was excellent during this month. The replacement of combat lost equipment remained the major supply problem. Items of critical shortage at the present time in the Brigade are; insect bars, food containers, water trailers, and typewriters.

(3) Class III & IIIA: Class III supply settled into a routine procedure. No critical problems were encountered.

(4) Class V: The Lunar New Years Offensive by the enemy forces caused an increased consumption of class V. Several items on the ASR were exceeded as a result. Operations in multiple locations made control of ammunition a problem. The Brigade was drawing ammunition from four (4) ammunition supply points concurrently during most of the month.

b. Maintenance:

(1) Significant Areas of Maintenance and Maintenance Problems:

(a) The performance of maintenance services on the UH-1H helicopters improved slightly during the month of February; however, the deadline rate of this aircraft in the brigade still continues to be unsatisfactory. Much of the difficulty can be attributed to the shortage of special tools for the aircraft. Repair parts, especially engines, have contributed significantly to this deadline rate.

(b) The repair capability of generators at the direct support maintenance level is extremely critical. The maintenance company is authorized a total of seven of these MGS's with currently only one assigned.

(2) Significant Maintenance Projects:

(a) The technical assistance inspection initiated 20 Jan 1968 was completed 10 February 1968. All units in the Brigade received assistance in the following areas.

1. PLL Records
2. Maintenance Records

(b) Units are to receive a 15% inspection on all equipment during the month of March. An additional training package is under development on supply records and TAERS.

c. Medical: Casualty figures for the month:

- | | |
|------------|----|
| (1) KRHA | 22 |
| (2) KBNRHA | 0 |

53

Incl 3

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

62

AVBE-SC/GHD
SUBJECT: Supply and Combat Service Activities

15 May 1968

- (3) IRRA 100
- (4) ISNRHA 18
- (5) MIA 1
- (6) Malaria 30

2. March:

a. Supply:

(1) Class I: Rations were supplied to the Brigade primarily from three locations during the month. Elements operating in the vicinity of Kontum drew rations from the ration breakdown point operated by the Brigade Class I Section at Kontum during most of the month. Rations for this operation were line hauled from Pleiku Sub Area Command. Elements in AO Bolling continued to draw from Tuy Hoa Sub Area Class I Supply Point. An Khe Base Camp Units plus the Quick Strike Battalion drew rations from the An Khe Class I Supply Point. Fresh filled milk was provided to elements in An Khe and Tuy Hoa. Arrangements have been made to provide this popular item to all Brigade elements commencing on 31 March 1968.

(2) Class II and IV: Class II support was furnished to all Brigade units from the An Khe Base Camp; shipments were made primarily by road conveyers, supplemented with air shipments. The posture in II and IV Supply continued to improve during the month. Combat loss replenishments improved also. The supply of M151A1 (1/4 ton trucks) has become critical and they are now command controlled. Previous critical items; insect bars, food containers and typewriters have begun to come into country. The supply of sand bags and concertina wire was a problem during the month.

(3) Class III and IIIA: No critical problems were encountered.

(4) Class V: The major problem area revolved around the Ammunition Supply Point at Kontum. The operation started as a joint operation of the 4th Infantry Division and the Brigade. The Brigade ended up with the total mission. Problems arose due to the large number and diversity of artillery units that were supported plus the inadequate space and the material handling equipment. The units stayed within the ASR during this period despite continued enemy contact.

b. Maintenance:

(1) Significant Areas of Maintenance and Maintenance Problems: The repair of construction equipment and generators continues to be a problem. Long and excessive deadlines are experienced with these items. This situation is attributed to a shortage of direct support maintenance personnel in these MOS's and a critical shortage of repair parts.

(2) Significant Maintenance Projects:

(a) A weapons technical assistance inspection was conducted in the Brigade for all units during the month of March. This was to assist units in the proper care and cleaning of the M16 rifle.

(b) A readiness assistance inspection was conducted in technical supply of Company D, 173d Support Battalion 17 thru 21 March 1968. This inspection was to assist in improving the supply responsiveness of technical supply.

(c) A Brigade Maintenance CMMI Team was formed and trained to conduct the maintenance and maintenance management inspection in the Brigade. This team is designed to assist the IG.

54

CONFIDENTIAL

633
CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Supply and Combat Service Activities

15 May 1968

c. Medical: Casualty figures for the month:

(1) KRHA	68
(2) KBNRHA	5
(3) IRHA	231
(4) IBNRHA	26
(5) MIA	4
(6) Malaria	25

3. April:

a. Supply.

(1) Class I: Rations have been supplied to the Brigade primarily from three locations during the month of April. The elements in the Bong Son area have been drawing supplies from the Class I area operated by the FSA (Forward Support Activity) supplemented by the 173d Airborne Brigade personnel. Fresh filled milk and ice cream has started going to these forward elements. Elements in AO Bolling continued to draw rations from the Tuy Hoa Sub Area Class I Supply Point. The elements in An Khe are drawing their Class I supplies from the An Khe Sub Area Class I supply point.

(2) Class II and IV: Class II and IV support was furnished to the Brigade from An Khe. Shipments made to the forward areas had been primarily by road supplemented with air shipments to Tuy Hoa. Several items still remain critical i.e., typewriters, generators, food containers, concertina wire and small regular fatigue trousers. During the month the units of the Brigade have drawn a total of 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks and 36 $\frac{3}{4}$ ton trucks. The II and IV status of supplies continues to improve and is expected to improve even more in the coming months.

(3) Class III and IIIA: No critical problems have been encountered. Class III support has been from FSA and is good.

(4) Class B: The class B problem of March no longer exist since the Brigade terminated its OPCON status to the 4th Division. The Brigade has remained within the ASR. The 1/69th Armor has exceeded the ASR on 40mm ammo. This is not charged against the 173d since the 1/69th continues to receive its allocation thru the 4th Division.

(5) The diversified operations of this Brigade has compounded the problem of dissemination of supplies. Regardless of the dispersica of the Brigade trucks to LZ English departed An Khe almost daily and on several days two and three trucks a day were dispatched from An Khe. Likewise trucks picked up supplies from the Qui Nhon Depot on a daily basis.

b. Maintenance:

(1) Significant Areas of Maintenance and Maintenance Problems:

(a) The repair of construction equipment continues to be a problem, especially in connection with the Air Mobile Kit "C". Manuals are not available, military TM's or manufacturer's literature, for the expeditious ordering of repair parts for this equipment.

(b) One quarter ton vehicle major assemblies are becoming critical, especially front and rear differentials, transmissions, transfer cases and engines. The system now employed is to obtain these assemblies from cannibalizing like vehicles that are ready for salvage. This system has now become unexceptionable

CONFIDENTIAL

64
15 May 1968

AVEL-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Supply and Combat Service Activities

since the above items are not available. Presently it has become necessary to work out vehicles for possibly one of these components. It is anticipated that only one out of three vehicles can be repaired if one of these major components becomes unserviceable.

(2) Significant Maintenance Projects:

(a) A one hundred percent inventory was completed this month in the An Khe area and in LZ English. Through this inventory we were able to decrease our zero balance of repair parts by fifteen percent.

(b) A technical assistance team is presently inspecting all starlight scopes to ascertain the serviceability of the starlight scopes throughout the Brigade. The most common deficiency noted is that the batteries are being left in the scopes when placed in temporary storage and in some cases the scope being stored with the scope operating.

(3) Technical Supply:

(a) During the last two weeks the "D" Company (Maintenance) Technical Supply has increased its percentage of fill by fifteen percent. This means that units will see an increase in fill of their requisitions for repair parts. Presently tech supply is releasing approximately five hundred lines a day to the brigade units.

(b) A repair parts reconciliation listing was sent to each unit for review of their outstanding requisitions, upon completion the units will have an exact count of all valid requisitions in tech supply.

(4) Company D (Maintenance), 173d Airborne Brigade production for the month of April is as follows:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>JOBS RECEIVED</u>	<u>JOBS COMPLETED</u>
Automotive	67	50
Service Section	192	164
Signal	669	545
Armament	465 (1)	365
Engineer	52	36
Office Machines	53 (2)	14

Note - (1) 37 ea weapons were evacuated to the 560th LEM Co, An Khe.

(2) 30 ea office machines were evacuated.

c. Medical Casualty figures for the month:

- (1) KRHA 10
- (2) KENRHA 5
- (3) IRHA 82
- (4) IBNRHA 27
- (5) MIA 1
- (6) Malaria 96

56

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

COMBAT AFTER ACTION INTERVIEW

"DOG" COMPANY
4TH BATTALION
503D (AIRBORNE) INFANTRY

173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE
(SEPARATE)

TUY HOA NORTH
30 - 31 JANUARY 1968



Incl 5

57

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Combat After Action Interview - "Dog" Company, 4th Battalion, 503d Infantry
(TUY HOA North)

II. Incloasures

1 - Interview with IPW Team's Contact with NVA Patrol 30 Jan 68

~~2 - Roster of Persons Interviewed~~

~~3 - Journal Copies 30-31 March~~

~~4 - POW Report: PFC Nguyen Chuong~~

~~5 - POW Report: PFC Nguyen Van Tuyen~~

Not Received, Hqs, DA

III. Maps, Diagrams and Photographs of TUY HOA North

~~TAB A - Aerial Photograph of TUY HOA North~~

~~TAB B - Aerial Photograph - US Scheme of Attack (photo 1)~~

~~TAB C - Aerial Photograph - Upper Village (photo 2)~~

~~TAB D - Aerial Photograph - Occupation of Village~~

~~TAB E - 1:50,000 Map of TUY HOA Area~~

~~TAB F - US & NVA Scheme of Maneuver (3 diagrams)~~

Omitted

CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)
APO San Francisco 96250

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

1. Name and Type Organization: D Company, 4th Battalion 503d Infantry 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate).
2. Inclusive Dates of Operation: 30 - 31 January 1968
3. Location: Map Sheet 6835 II, TUY HOA (Chau Thanh) vic CQ 153477
4. Control or Command Headquarters: CG, 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep)
5. Persons Being Interviewed: See Inclosure 2.
6. Task Organization: 4th Battalion, 503d Airborne Infantry.
7. Supporting Forces: Helicopter Gunships, 335th Assault Helicopter Co, 81mm mortars, (organic) 51st Chemical Detachment, 173d Abn Bde, FO party, 3d Bn - 319th Arty, C Btry 6th Bn 32d Artillery, C Btry, 3d Bn 319th Arty (illumination only), 2d Bn 47th ARVN Regiment, elements of TUY HOA Regional and Popular Forces and Republic of Korea Artillery (105mm) Army of Vietnam Artillery (105mm). TAC Air Support (F-100's) 308th TAC Fighter Sqn (TUY HOA) and 3d TAC Fighter wing (BIEN HOA).

8. Introduction & Background: This combat after action interview contains not only the after action interview with D Company 4th Bn 503d Infantry but interviews with captured NVA prisoners from the 5th Bn, 95th NVA Regt, men from the attacked C Battery, 6th Battery, 6th Bn, 32d Artillery, the 51st Chemical Det (173d Airborne Brigade), the 172d MI Detachment (173d Airborne Brigade), the Commanding General's aide, and the warden of the South Vietnamese Rehabilitation of PHUI YEN. The idea is to tell the story of the Communist Tet offense in TUY HOA and the part the 173d Airborne Brigade played in smashing it. Special thanks on this report is due SSG Robert J. Destatte, interrogator from the 172d MI Det who worked many extra hours to provide the NVA POW interviews. POW interviews as well as those from units other than D Company are interjected wherever they pertain either in the background statement of the mission narrative.

Since November 1967 when the majority of the 173d Airborne Brigade (Sep) departed the TUY HOA area to participate in Operation MACARTHUR in DAK TO/KONTUM area the 5th Bn 95th NVA Regt had moved back into the mountains (vic CQ 010541) where they could operate in a group of hamlets in the NW corner of TUY HOA Valley. Here they continued to get rice from the Hoa Quang Village and operate 10 - 15 kilometers west of TUY HOA City.

The 5-95th Regt (NVA) received orders to move down and strike the district capital of TUY HOA on the morning of Tet (30 Jan 68). They were to strike the American Artillery base at TUY HOA North, destroy the airfield there and celebrate Tet with the people of TUY HOA.

HOANG MINH SANG (QM ASSPIRANT, HQ 95th Regt attached to 5th Bn to handle provisions for the operation). "Mission of attack on TUY HOA was to destroy the puppet's (ARVN) troops and puppet government, drive the Americans from the fatherland and to liberate the people of the South and reunite the country under freedom and democracy."

SGT LEDUC XIQ (Squad leader 82mm mortar platoon). "If we weren't successful we were to retreat, rest, then return and hit TUY HOA again."

The attack was suppose to be in conjunction with the 85th VC Main Force Battalion (est-strength 250 men) on the same day. The 5th Bn was counting on the 85th VC Bn's help in the city; however the 85th VC Bn aborted their mission.

CONFIDENTIAL 59

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBt-SC/MHD
SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

PARAP NGOC LANG (Ass't Company Commander, 2d Company 85th VC Bn, who surrender himself and 15 men in TUY HOA City on 5 Feb 68). "We (the 85th Bn) were suppose to attack on Tét but we had advanced only half way between the mountains and the city when our recon element returned saying if we continued we'd run into a government ambush on the western edge of the city."

The 5th Bn had three infantry companies: 1st, 2nd and 3rd Company with a strength of approximately 55 men per company. Attached to them was a recon element (est 15 men) from the n-21 Recon/Sapper Company and a mortar platoon (2 82mm mortars) from the Regt's K-17 Mortar Company. There were also a few special support troops such as ui and medics attached from the Regimental HQ, and a small local force VC element acting as guides.

The 5th Bn was armed with SKS carbines, AK-47 automatic rifles, B-40 rocket launchers, RrD machine guns, a few DPM medium machine guns and 2 82mm mortars (possibly there was a 60mm mortar per company but none were captured). The soldiers were armed with 1-4 grenades each, riflemen carried between 30 to 50 rounds, automatic weapons men (AK-47) carried 60 to 90 rounds. RPD machine gunners had 300 rounds in 3 100 round drums, B-40's had 3 to 4 rounds (1 at) and the 82 mortars had 10-15 rounds per tube.

PFC TUYUN (NVA POW) "I had 60 rounds of ammunition, 2 magazines for my AK-47. This is not a small amount at all, 60 to 90 rounds was plenty for our side because we don't fire our ammunition wastefully like your side does."

"The 5th Bn's morale depended upon the individual, some had high morale others would have preferred to celebrate Tét back at their hospital with their wounded."

1LT PHUC (S-2 47th ARVN Regt) "Generally speaking the morale of the attacking unit was low."

The Bn moved out of the mountains (vic Cq 010540 beginning about 1800 hours, at 1900 hours they had reached canal no. 1 on the valley floor (vic Cq 050490) and pushed on pass the Dong Hoa Church (2000 hours) and arrived at the foot of CHAP CHAT Mountain at 2130 hours. The local people encountered on the way caused no trouble. From CHAP CHAT they moved into the delta (rice fields) and crossed a shallow river, here they split up with the 1st and 2d company (plus supporting forces and the Sapper/Recon force acting as security for the Bn HQ) moved to the south of the airfield and the 3d company moved to the front of the American Artillery position. The Battalion had arrived in front of the airfield at about 0100 30 Jan 68. The attack was suppose to have started at 0100 but according to the NVA POW the local guide took to long to get them there.

The attack was to open by firing the mortars on to the airfield. The 3d Company was to take the artillery position and blow up the aircraft on the field. The task were broken down by platoons, as to taking bunkers, armored vehicles and blowing up aircraft.

PFC BUI VAN TUONG (3d Co) "My cell was assigned to take a pillbox (sand bag bunker), my platoon was to get the pillboxes and tanks (there were 2 dual 40mm dusters on the perimeter) the rest of the company was to get the artillery and airplanes. We didn't have anything to cut the barbwire we were to crawl through it, we didn't have any special explosives for blowing up the artillery. There was no special mission to seize or destroy the radar site I didn't even know there was one there." (The 3d Bn (Abn) 319th Artillery had a counter mortar radar site inside C Btry 6th Bn 32d Arty perimeter).

SPC VERNON SKILES (Chief of Firing Btry, C 6-32d Arty) "We had four MG bunkers to the front with 2 men to a bunker, there was a dual 40mm gun (SP) on the right front and another on the back of the perimeter. The two 8" howitzers (SP) and 2,175 guns (SP) were about ten to fifteen meters behind the

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBL-SC/RHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report

bunkers. The gunner in the number 3 bunker gave the alert and opened up. They were already into the wire when we started firing. They captured the number three bunker and turned the gun around on us. They blew up one powder magazine and damaged the tube on a 175 gun (which only had 36 rounds of tube life remaining). We tried to keep down the wild firing and shoot at only targets. The dual 40mm duster moved up and blew the captured No. 3 bunker away. They pushed about 30 meters into our perimeter and also got into the radar site on our left. When the paratroopers came in at 0430 we pushed them out into the rice paddies and worked them over with MG and 40mm fire. After the battle we counted 19 dead NVA in the perimeter and a ROK sweep in front found 43 more NVA. of the 100 artillerymen, four were killed."

POC BUI (NVA) "We were not successful, we were defeated and forced to withdraw."

Meanwhile 1LT William Kennedy the artillery battery commander at 0405 had reported to the 173d Abn Bde TAC CP that they were receiving incoming mortar and small arms fire and an estimated VC platoon (40 men) was inside the perimeter. He requested the Brigade Reaction Force. The TAC CP immediately notified the Commanding General, the S-2, S-3, Aviation Officer, Air Force Liaison Officer, CO 4th Bn 503d Inf, CO 3 Bn 319th Arty, E-17th Cav and D Co. 16th Armor. At 0430 the 4-503d Inf was notified to have 1 company to move to TUY HOA North.

CPT JIMMY JACKSON "Dog Company was alerted about 0500 to prepare for extraction from our field perimeter (vic BQ 998447), there was no chance to eat but the men carried plenty of food since we had just been resupplied for five days the night before. (The Company had been on a search and destroy operation for the past 10 days). About 0530 the battalion CO (LTC James H. Johnson) landed and briefed me on the operational plan."

"Dog Company has two rifle platoons of 35 men each, a HQ section and mortar section with 2 60mm mortars; attached were an Arty FO Team (3 Bn 319th Arty), 4.2 mortar FO Team, an Engineer Team (2 men) and a dog team (1 man, 1 dog). The men carried 500 (+) rounds of M-16 ammo, machine gunners carried 1500 rounds, M-79 men 50 + rounds, the mortars had 100 rounds. Every man carried two frag and two smoke grenades, two claymore mines and two trip flares. Each man carried his rucksack and there were 10 LAWS spread through the company, there was a M-17 protective mask for every four men."

9. Intelligence: It had been reported the TUY HOA North Airfield (CG 154477) had received a probe and the area had been initially overrun from the west. The airfield to the east was still secure.

10. Mission: The company would take helicopters into airfield (southern end) and push to west until they neutralized all hostile positions in the perimeter.

11. Concept of the Operation and Execution: The helicopters (CH-47's and UH-1B's) came in after 0600 o'clock and started extracting Dog Co under illumination furnished by the Artillery, and illumination pots prepositioned along the PZ in an "L" shape. Ships landed to the east of them.

Captain Jimmy Jackson "I arrived at the airfield on first ship with the assault elements around 0645. The aircraft approached the LZ from South to North. Hostile fire came from the west side of the LZ. The aircraft (CH-47) received fire and one of the engines was shot out, we had 32 men on the first lift. Our chopper landed behind artillery perimeter. When we left it the hook was smoking. The second hook was diverted to TUY HOA South airfield where the slicks would pick them up after they dropped the 3d lift."

The 3d lift was composed of 6 slicks and they came in same place as 1st lift. The troops entered through the back of the artillery perimeter's wire

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBL-SC/...

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

and dropped rucksacks as they went through the wire, the men pulled their extra ammo off the rucksacks. The 2d platoon and the Spearhead (point of five volunteers) were the first through the wire. The Spearhead pushed ahead followed by 2d platoon on line. The assault element pushed due west across the compound and swung to the southwest; the paratroopers were holding their fire because it was still dark and friendly artillerymen were crouched in behind cover.

SGT Michael Plank The Spearhead came up on the sand dune a little to the north of the radar site. The NVA had gotten into the ammo bunkers. We assaulted the bunkers with fire and grenades. PFC Mahon (James E. Jr.) was leading the Spearhead, I yelled to him, watch out there are Gooks here."

Mahon yelled back, "That's what we're here for."

"and then he grenaded the bunker. We moved up to the generator on the artillery perimeter left and attacked a bunker there. We could identify the artillery people by their black jackets."

There was a lull in the firing then from snipers and automatic weapons. LTC Robert L. Whitbeck had already been killed near the radar site. The Spearhead pushed to southwest and neutralized the area and recovered the Artillery Bn Commander's body. They began receiving sniper fire from the Northern Choi Hoi Rehabilitation Center tower. The company then set up a perimeter until 1st platoon arrived. Clicks went over and picked up 1st platoon from the TUY HOA South Airfield and moved them to 2d platoons landing zone.

The 2d platoon pushed up through C battery and C Battery filled in behind them. The dual 40mm custers were to the right. There were in some of the front bunkers along the front of the wire using small arms and automatic weapons; the paratroopers knocked out the captured bunkers and neutralized the northern tower. The NVA who were crawling in the drainage ditch which led up to the perimeter were killed with .79 fire and grenades.

Choppers brought in 1st platoon and mortar section. The 60 mm mortars were set up at the rear of the artillery perimeter. It took Dog Company about 20 to 30 minutes to restore perimeter.

SSG Roscoe Fraizer "We moved up through the compound and came up on the perimeter where the 40mm was leveled. When we got up on the perimeter Puff (C-47) came by and opened and swept the rice paddies to the front with mini-gun fire. We set up on the perimeter."

SGT Plank "We secured the radar site and started moving through the barbed wire towards the rice paddies when Puff (C-47 gunship) opened up."

LT Burton "Actually we were down next to the rice paddies, sitting in a ditch. The 2nd platoon rear elements received the rounds from Snoopy as they cleared the SW portion of the perimeter closing on the Spearhead."

SGT John B McCullers "We moved forward pass the guns (175mm), 1LT Greene (Lawrence D.) told SSG Fraizer to move down to the forward edge of the wire. When we came up on the left near the generator we started receiving fire from the North Tower (northern tower of the RVN Phui Yen Rehabilitation Center located about 100 meters left of the artillery compound). I told 1LT Burton (Michael D) that the tower was firing on us, it wasn't completely light yet and we could see the muzzle flashes. LT Burton ordered them to fire on it and they really smoked it for about 10 minutes. LT Greene fired a LAW into the tower at the climax of the small arms and automatic weapons fire. Then somebody came out and waved."

Mr. Hue (Garden Phui Yen Rehabilitation Center) "Several NVA took the northern tower of the compound. The Americans in the artillery compound fired

CONFIDENTIAL

AVB-EC/JHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

directly on the tower and the NVA they didn't kill jumped out and ran away. I walked out and waved to them to stop firing. There were 3 dead NVA in the tower."

Upon neutralizing the tower's spearhead pushed thru the wire to a point between perimeter and tower. 1st platoon deployed behind the Spearhead and to the right of the 2d platoon. The 40mm's were firing at targets of opportunity to the front.

PFC NGUYEN CHUNG (cook 2d Co) (NVA POW) "There were 16 (cooks, finance clerks and quartermaster) of us, most of us unarmed waiting out in the rice paddies during the battle. About 0600 a runner came out and told us to move to the village in the South because it was to close to dawn and we would be caught in the open rice fields, so they decided to move into the village. Shortly after we moved into the village we were compromised and surrounded by government troops."

"As soon as we moved into the village the Bn CO positioned the troops and ordered them to dig in with O/H cover and prepare to defend their positions. I was positioned with the Bn HQ element which we dug in one man holes at one and two meter intervals on either side of a village street. Then I started preparing food for the troops."

"About seven or eight o'clock the American forces started to move in. However, the Americans then withdrew."

Captain Jackson "As it got light you could see that some of the die hards were still trying to come in but the others had got the message. The NVA were moving out into the rice paddies. Then we were supported by gunships firing into the rice paddies. Snoopy (C-47) sprayed right on top of the NVA. The NVA were exposed in the rice paddies. The NVA were firing back but it was sporadic."

PFC Willie N. Cox (2nd Plt) "We led out of the perimeter to check the tower but we were told that the area was mined. We moved into a trench, the Gooks seemed to have been pushed out so we made some chicken soup and ate breakfast."

SGM Arthur "We landed and tagged onto the rifle company. It was first light. A few minutes before, the Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Whitbeck who commanded the 173d Airborne Brigade's 319th Airborne Field Artillery Battalion was shot and killed by an NVA soldier with an automatic weapon (AK-47). It was on this spot that LTC Johnson chose for his first Command Post. We set up on top of a huge rockpile on the edge of the perimeter nearest the enemy in order to offer maximum visibility."

1LT Frank H. Akers (Aide de camp to Brigadier General Leo H. Schweiter) "We landed at TUY HOA North airfield behind the aid station and General Leo H. Schweiter was met by Colonel Johnson and LTC Veron Walters Deputy Senior Providence Advisor."

"We moved up to check bunker positions. General Schweiter inspected the bunker position (we were still getting occasional fire). Then we moved up to the radar site and then moved to the left front of the perimeter behind a small rock pile. The 47th ARVN Regt Co came up and General Schweiter, Col Nugum Van Ba and LTC Johnson started conferring when mortar fire came in so they moved to the bunker. They decided to prepare an overlay of ARVN positions for LTC Johnson and discussed coordination of maneuver of allied elements to seal the area off. We didn't know exact size of enemy force, expected an enemy company. LTC Johnson presented his scheme of maneuver which the General acknowledged. Then went to the chopper to coordinate with other allied forces."

SGM Arthur "General Schweiter and his group had been in our CP area, coordinating with the ground commanders concerned, and making an estimate of the situation."

63

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

The area had been neutralized by C730. The BN Commander then gave CPT Jackson the mission of clearing the village south of TUY HOA North airfield and clearing the village to the north. Captain Jackson ordered the 2d platoon with the Spearhead as scout to clear the southern village and the 1st platoon under 1st Proffitt to clear the village to the north.

It was about 0800 when the Spearhead moved out behind the Rehabilitation Center. The Spearhead led in a diamond formation followed by LT Green's 2d platoon in a wide column. They moved up towards the southeastern side of the village.

SGT Plank "We saw some dead Gooks when we passed the prison compound (on the eastern side). Some legs said there was a MG down to the south. We saw smoke coming from the direction of the village. We moved along the dirt road."

SGT Cook "The Spearhead was in an echelon left about 100 meters in front of the 2d platoon. Mahon was on the road, Plank was on the left, Cox to the right as we swept towards the village this put one man on the high ground (Mahon) and one in the village (Cox). The 2d platoon was following in 2 files. Mahon was moving out at the double time, the rest of us were having trouble keeping up. We saw the graveyard on the hill and Mahon was on the ridgeline. All of a sudden I saw some movement and Killer (Mahon) had jumped a bunch of NVA in holes. I threw a grenade in the first hole and Killer knocked out two holes real quick, the NVA were facing in the wrong direction. Killer was grabbing Gooks weapons and killing them with their own weapon, he took an AK-47 and jammed it in a Gook's mouth and blew his head off. In the next hole the Gook was waiting on him and they shot each other. The Gook died and Killer was wounded. The rest of the Gooks who we hadn't killed fragging the holes jumped up and ran, the ARVN's on the next hill took them under fire. I know we killed five right there. The ARVN's came over and stripped the bodies. Killer kept yelling for a weapon so he could go back and kill more. The ARVN's evacuated Killer."

PFC Cox "Just before Killer got on top of the NVA holes the ARVN's on the hill waved their arms and yelled 'Beaucoup VC.' We threw frags and WP then turned towards the village and stopped. I only had a .45 automatic. So I picked up a Gook rifle."

"We moved up into the village and fired up a likely hole, a hut and hedge-line. I pulled a grenade and saw a little old lady in a hole. I ran her off and then tossed the grenade into a hut. We moved back and started firing down into the NVA in the village."

The 2d platoon was strung out in a line east of the village about 100 meters from the village. As the 2d platoon closed on Spearhead small arms and automatic weapons fire came from the village. The 2d platoon swept on towards the village, LT Greene was trying to move the platoon on line. As they moved up next to a grave SP4 Ralph W. Meader the RTO was hit, LT Greene moved towards Meader and he was hit. LT Greene was killed. Snipers fired on PVT Robert E. Harden when he moved up. The men yelled for a medic but they couldn't get one. Some of the men were begging to go out to the lieutenant and RTO but the others kept them back because of the fire.

PFC Cox "We could see the NVA jumping up and running around going in and out of holes. If you got on the wrong side of the ridge you got fired on."

SSG Wermone Westham "PFC Thomas H. Swinnea said he spotted the sniper that was doing the damage but then he was hit. The medic (SP5 Caldwell) moved up and patched him up. I moved down and checked LT Greene, he was dead, we grabbed Meader while the others laid down a base of covering fire. While Caldwell was working on Meader a tracked ammunition carrier from the artillery battery pulled up driven by SP4 James L. Murphy (C-6-32d Arty). The track picked up the wounded and evacuated them. We were in the grave yard on top of the hill and bullets were bouncing off the tombstones. We started getting some

64

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBL-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

machine gun fire up on the hill. A Gook lifted his head up right in front of SSG Fraiser and got it blown away. The platoon laid down suppressive fire to keep the NVA pinned down."

First knowledge of the contact the CO had was when medics were requested by SSG Martinovsky the Plt NCO. Captain Jackson recalled the 1st platoon from the right. Meanwhile the 2d platoon spread out to form a horseshoe around the village from south to north with the ARVNs on the high ground to the south. The recalled 1st platoon followed the 2d platoon's route. Gunships directed by American advisors with the ARVNs were working over the village from the air.

Some civilians came in from the village and the medics help patch up one civilian male. The ARVN advisor coordinated with the left flank of Dog Co. (Spearhead) and directed rocket firing helicopters against spotted enemy positions. The men could only pop up and fire. They spotted a sniper under a board with a red scarf or bloody head firing, there was a machine gun firing behind him. Hand grenades and M-79 fire neutralized the position but other men (NVA) crawled in and filled the gap.

Targets of opportunity were being engaged by the 2d platoon which occupied the high ground surrounding the village. First estimates put no more than a platoon of NVA in the village. Scrub and cactus were the only vegetation growing on the sand dunes. The weather was hot and humid. 1SG Artis Knight who had requested a tracked ammunition carrier from the artillery compound brought up ammunition and evacuated wounded with it. The 1st platoon moved in and reinforced the right side of 2d platoon. The 1st platoon under LT Proffitt, deployed with a man about every 8 or 10 yards. It was about nine o'clock when everyone was in position. The first casualties were starting to come in from the flank positions at this time.

While the 1st platoon was moving in CPT Jackson had been unable to contact LT Greene on the radio so he sent his XO 1LT Michael Burton over to see what was happening and to insure the lines were tied in. When notified LT Greene was dead CPT Jackson put LT Burton in command. LT Burton worked around and tied in with the ARVN unit. The ARVNs came up on CPT Jackson's push when LT Burton furnished the 47th ARVNs with a RTO and radio. CPT Jackson then had good grasp of the situation. Men were firing on NVA in the village. On third trip the prime mover brought up the 60mm mortars right behind the hill and put them into action. The mortars initially fired at a range of 300 meters and dropped the adjusting rounds right in the village. With the correct range the mortars commenced firing in 3 round volleys.

Over to the left of the 2d platoon the Spearhead element had set up on a dune with the ARVNs on the high ground to their rear. In the right corner of the village they could see a sniper lifting up a tin cover and firing, they laid heavy semi automatic fire on him. Some NVA started moving out of the village to the south (the left of the Spearhead) and the Spearhead started receiving fire from them. The Spearhead was running low on ammunition when SGT Cook and PVT James R. Price came up with some more machine gun ammunition. The machine gun opened up the village with a heavy volume of fire and the men saw 3 NVA fall.

The NVA were putting out a lot of return fire. (Sporadic fire whenever there was a lull from gunship, mortars and automatic weapons).

CPT Jackson "As we set up around the village I advised LTC Johnson of the situation, the fire we were receiving and casualties. I also requested additional ammo. Ammo was being resupplied from Artillery compound and by chopper resupply. Fire coordination was good our mortars would cease fire for gunships, their miniguns and rockets were effective. I also received a S-2 report of NVA reinforced platoon located in the village."

"The Battalion Commander informed me he wanted to put CS gas in the village

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

(No friendly civilians in the village had been reported to the CO). LTC Johnson wanted to gas the village and follow it up with a company assault. He also said he was putting G-45C3d on standby and was sending up additional M-17 masks so each man in the company would have one. He was also sending up a chemical team with E-8 portable CS gas, grenade launchers and had called for a helicopter to drop gas also. CPT Jackson rearranged the 1st platoon on the north and the 2d platoon on the east, the Spearhead element remained the furthest east. The ARVN's were warned to pull back for the gas attack. The ARVN's withdrew but the Popular Forces came up, however, they drew back when the American ARVN advisor came up.

During the interim 30 minutes after LTC Johnson informed CPT Jackson of the plan the platoons were briefed and issued fresh ammunition and extra hand grenades. The Battalion Chemical NCO brought up mask and the E-8 launchers and instructed them on their deployment; masks were issued and the chemical apparatus set up. Ammunition resupply and evacuation continued without stopping. About 1145 the Battalion CO crawled up to the Company CP and advised CPT Jackson to kick off the attack at 1200 if the ships were on station at that time with the CS gas. The ships came on station about 1215 made 3 passes putting gas east of the village so that the wind blew it across the village. The 3d pass was the signal to ignite the company gas apparatus. The company gas firing was the signal for attack.

CPT Jackson "I monitored a radio message from the S-3 section to the Bn CO of an NVA Co. in the village."

SP4 Danny Sudreth (51st Chem Det) "We were notified about 11:30 that the 4th Bn wanted some CS dropped. They furnished us coordinates and we loaded 10 cases (16 grenades to a case with pins pulled and wrapped with det cord which was fired with blasting caps with 20 second fuze) which we had pre stocked. We flew over the area and they told us where to drop it. We made 3 passes and threw out one case from either side on the 1st pass at an altitude of 1800 feet. They exploded right over the village. Then we made two more passes and dumped the rest. The effect looked like a big cloud covering the village. Most all of it landed on the eastern edge of the village and blew across it as the wind was blowing from east to west."

PPC Cox "When the ARVN's moved back during the gas attack the NVA tried to follow up but I stopped them again with my MG."

D Company assaulted the village from the north with the mission of clearing the village to the south and to the river. Supporting fires from the ARVN's were to shift fires south as US troops advanced, all but one squad of 2d platoon had shifted north to attack with 1st platoon. Due to the toll in casualties 1SG Knight was put in charge of the left flank element. The 1st platoon under 1LT Proffitt was in the middle. The 2d platoon under SSG Miloslav Martinosky was on the right flank, the CP was in the middle. LT Burton was in charge of coordination with the 47th ARVN Regt on the left.

CPT Jackson "It was hot in those mask and the men were crouching down in sand, sweating in the heat. I ordered every other man to throw a grenade and then assault. When the gas launchers fired I jumped up, threw a grenade and yelled 'Lets go.' I realized that the men might not assault at the same time thus causing half of the assault element to go on line and the remainder to lay and ponder on the idea. I realized if they saw me up and moving in their midst this would instill them to push over the hill into the assault without hesitation, thus activating their military training and reaction. Every other man threw a grenade over the hill and began a walking assault. As the men went over the hill the village was partially masked by smoke from the gas. Contact on the right flank was especially heavy as we hit the outskirts of the village. Then as we moved into the village the men broke into 3 and 4 man teams keeping in a pretty even line."

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

The paratroopers moved down the hill on line, receiving fire from the middle of the village. Several men were hit and others pulled them back to aid. As the paratroopers moved down the hill one man grabbed up an AK-47 and as a NVA jumped out of a hole he tried to fire but the Chinese weapon jammed. The NVA ran around a corner into another group of charging paratroopers, he doubled back and the trooper's AK-47 jammed again, finally he cleared it in time to blast the fleeing enemy soldier. When questioned by his CO as to why he was using the AK-47 instead of his M-16 the paratrooper drawled "Just wanted to try his weapon Sir, ain't never killed a man with his own gun before."

The Company Commander led his group down the third row of huts. LT Proffitt led his platoon down on the right side. LIC Johnson and his party accompanied the assault and set up his CP on the edge of the village.

CPT Jackson "As we moved into the village the team on my left eliminated a hooch with 3 NVA inside. As they moved around to the left side of the hooch one of the team members (PVT Battle) spotted a NVA coming out of a spider hole to his left flank about 3 meters away. He whirled to his left and shot him in the head just as the gook throw a hand grenade. About six men were on his right and when he fired everyone dove for cover in all four directions. I moved towards the right flank and came upon a team pinned down on both sides of a hooch. I told them to move out but they hesitated and I said 'Follow me'. I led out around the right side of the hooch directing fire to the suspected areas of hostile fore. As I fired to my front they maneuvered to my left and placed a heavy volume of fire in the suspected area causing it to be neutralized.

MSG Artis Knight Jr "I hit the left flank we went in on the last building. As we got there we broke contact with the right. As we kept moving in we kept getting more fire from the right. We couldn't get commo with the right. LT Burton, who was observing the action from his left flank OP, and I agreed over the radio we should link up with the right and wheel right but only if we could contact them. We were taking wounded then. I ran around and came to the right. One man was just clearing a spider hole for the second time. We then planned to wheel right but SGT Tucker called and said Big 6 said to move back and burn everything."

CPT Jackson "The teams were about half through the village when the right side bogged down while the left still advanced. It looked like the NVA had withdrawn into the Battalion CP area in a group of 30 or 40. When the right flank hit the NVA CP area they began to take casualties. I called in to En CO and advised him the right flank had bogged down and was taking casualties. Then we began to take casualties on the left. NVA were coming out of spider holes at a range of 10 and 15 feet. Our only advantage was that the NVA had to come out of their holes arms first and the men were picking them up out the corner of their eye and wheeling to the flank and chopping them down. The biggest problem was making the assault with the protective mask on. The NVA positions were well camouflaged and further helped by smoke from the burning huts.

PFC NGUYEN (NVA POW) "Our people were well concealed and dug in and fired sparingly and accurately as opposed to the Americans which had to move in the open and fired a lot in a confused manner. Your own mortars wounded some of your people."

"When they used the gas against us we didn't have any masks. Some men used damp towels and this protected them. Those that didn't have towels the gas was very uncomfortable, it made their eyes water and nose burn, but it didn't cause any confusion in the HQ."

Due to the hot humid condition and burning huts the gas rose fairly fast and between the smoke (created by the burning debris in the village from the supporting fires) and the gas the paratroopers had enough cover to allow them to move over the top of the hill and pass the outer NVA defense. Once inside close in house to house fighting commenced. The maneuver scheme was to move one team right or left and cover the adjacent team.

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MRD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

CPT Jackson "Working in teams to mutually support each other, the teams would neutralize a position from the flank that had a team to their right or left pinned down. When it was neutralized the team in that sector would move forward and support from the flank the advancement of a team on their right or left."

The troopers worded from hut throwing frag grenades and occasional CS grenades. On the left after a CS grenade had been discharged two men ran out of a hut without weapons SGT Oden grabbed one and tied him up and SP4 Harry T. Fower III grabbed the other one.

The NVA started draving back to their CP which was to the advancing para-troopers right flank and from there started putting out a heavy volume of fire.

The CO lost communications with the left flank and not being abreast of the situation the CO called his reserves (composed of LT Burton, 1 squad from 2d platoon and Spearhead element). They came from their position on the south-east side of the village and followed in behind the company. The Company Commander got separated from the company RTO but still had contact with the Battalion CO. He advised him that right flank was bogged down and he was moving in that direction to determine the situation. After reaching the right flank which was under heavy fire he determined he was stopped cold and was taking heavy casualties.

CPT Jackson "I was separated from the company RTO and had to switch the battalion radio to the comany net. This brought me abreast of the complete situation, the right flank had to be moved so I ordered my reserves (LT Burton, one squad from the 2d platoon and the Spearhead element) to come up."

"The right flank was completely stopped. Platoon Leader Proffitt said he had a lot of men wounded. We were in the middle of the village and I asked for a pack count to the right. The count came back eight. I couldn't visualize just eight. . . then the count came back again: twelve, four of which were dead."

SGM Arthur "The combat troopers of Company D were either dead, seriously wounded, lightly wounded, pinned down or otherwise so busily engaged fighting the enemy at this point that there was no detail available to carry grenades. Major Oarding, our S3 Officer, and I decided that we would deliver the grenades. He would take some to the center portion of the line, and I had about a sixty yard dash to make with mine."

"Along about this time General Schweiter arrived on the scene. I have never seen a General just a few yards from where his troops were slaying and being slain before, but I can't say that now."

LT Akers "That afternoon about 1300 hours, we went back and landed and the General asked me if I thought we could find the 4th Battalion's CP. I said it would most likely be forward. So the General said let's go. The artillery ammunition carrier came by with ammunition so I suggested jumping aboard. We jumped on the back of the ammunition carrier. We could hear heavy firing from attacking paratroopers being answered by occasional heavy NVA fire. Then we saw SGM Arthurs directing the track to his position just behind the crest of the hill so that you could see the village from the track but it was in hull down behind the hill."

"General Schweiter jumped out of the track and we spotted LTC Johnson located on the forward slope of a sand dune near the edge of the village with a radio on his back. We started to run down to LTC Johnson. Then SGM Arthurs came around and yelled 'General you shouldn't be down here, there's a lot of firing going on.'"

68

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MRD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

"General Schweiter continued onto LTC Johnson's position. They conferred at the northeast corner of the village. There was still some gas in the area. LTC Johnson informed the General that the NVA were still offering heavy resistance and that he felt that there was at least a company. They moved behind the wall of the first hut. While they were talking a burst of M-47 fire came over their heads. I turned around and yelled to SGT Humphreys (4th Battalion's chemical MCC) and the men up the hill behind him."

"Hey! Didn't that come from behind us?"

"SGT Humphreys said, 'Yes'. I told him to get someone up there and get the sniper. Then I crawled up the hill and directed some fire against the sniper position and they received no more fire from it. As I returned I saw a man staggering up the lane between the hut. I recognized SGT Houtz of the Battalion S3, he was holding his right side. I directed him over and examined his wound (a frag wound in the back). We then called a medic over who bandaged his back and prepared morphine. But the SGT said 'Don't waste it on me.' The SGT refused aid and told me there were several guys about 15 meters down in the village. He said he'd tried to bring some out but couldn't. He said, 'Someone's got to get them out. There's a couple of guys real bad, one of them had a head wound.'"

"I slung my CAR-15 and ran down the lane and picked up the man with a head wound. Another paratrooper materialized with a stretcher and we loaded the man on and moved back to the track. When I got there there were two or three other wounded around it waiting for evacuation and a medic to load the track."

"SGM Arthurs came up yelling for a stretcher. We broke up to search for a stretcher or anything to carry a man with. I went to the left where I saw Major Oerding (Battalion S3) who was also looking for a stretcher. I picked up a basket and ran back. SGM Arthurs and I ran back into the village with the basket but it didn't work. The man was wounded in the chest and face. SGM Arthurs and I started carrying him up by arms and Major Oerding picked up his feet. We got all the wounded loaded up when the SGM saw the ammo hadn't been unloaded. They unloaded part of the ammo and grenades."

"I ran back to the General and suggested we go back on the track. The General got in the track and it turned around and started moving. As we approached the helicopters, I signaled the dustoff helicopter to start up. The General and I helped load the wounded since most of the men were in shock. After the wounded were loaded on the dustoff chopper the General took 2 walking wounded with him and we flew off to brief the IFRV Commanding General."

SGM Arthurs "General Schweiter and the Colonel decided that being as there were too many of them and they were well emplaced, that we would withdraw, stay on the high ground to prevent the enemy from escaping, and bring in air strikes."

Before General Schweiter left he and LTC Johnson instructed the men to burn all the huts on the left where the sniper fire was coming from.

CPT Jackson "The Colonel came down into the CP area to verify the withdrawal. However, snipers had the area zeroed in and the men were getting hit when they tried to move. The area was covered in rubble and smoke from the burning huts."

SGM Arthurs: "We found CPT Jimmy Jackson and LTC Johnson set his CP up right there with him. After the battle, prisoners showed us the enemy battalion CP. We couldn't have been more than 25 yards from it. The enemy put some of the closest clicks on us at that point, moving into that area, and I thought we had had it."

"LTC Johnson briefed CPT Jackson. He told him we weren't leaving as long

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

as there was still one wounded Geronimo trooper in the village, but we would make an orderly, military withdrawal, fighting our way out and put airstrikes in on the foe. At this point, it is impossible to ascertain how many of them we had killed and/or wounded, but just about everybody we saw after the battle had bullet holes in them. Company D's paratroopers were nobody's patsy. Charles paid off with compound interest for every casualty he exacted from us."

CPT Jackson "RTO Roney Smith was hit and LT Proffitt put fire in the area where the rounds came from. Then he was hit. We put more fire into the area and I ordered LT Proffitt to go back and guide the reserves in so we could execute the withdrawal."

The reserves came under fire as they came in. The CP group and the last elements on the right flank were preparing to withdraw when a grenade came in and suddenly exploded. PFC Richard Cooney a machinegunner was wounded in the arm. SGT James E. Rosenback was hit in the foot. The explosion ignited a CS grenade hanging on PVT Arthur Elliott's chest. CPT Jackson at first thought it was a WP grenade but the gas came spinning out amidst the command group and covering party. Those who had taken off masks were scrambling to mask. As soon as the men masked they evacuated the wounded and resumed their covering fire.

The reinforcements had stopped and started evacuation of the wounded on the right flank which was not what the CO had in mind. Smoke and obstacles kept the CO from seeing and the CS grenade had caused everyone to withdraw about 10 feet.

CPT Jackson "Elements from the left sector under command of the 1st Sgt reached the Co. CP group first, when they met the wounded from the right sector on the way to the rear, they thought it was the right sector withdrawing in total so they helped evacuate the wounded. LT Burton realized this was not the entire right sector by communicating with me over the radio. He pushed the reserves over the hill to my location. Sgt Cook volunteered to cover the withdrawal alone but I told him I would be the last one out of this village but he was welcome to stay with me. We covered the withdrawal of the remaining elements of the right sector and the relief force. Sgt Cook and I would withdraw by leaps and bounds firing as we went.

The reserves were to have covered the right flanks withdrawal. Then about a squad under 1SG Knight came up. CPT Jackson went up with SGT Burl Barnes and they found out Elliott was dead.

CPT Jackson "We commenced an orderly withdrawal by fire and maneuver. When SGT Cook and I reached the last building I saw SGT Fraizer and Barnes coming up left side of the village. We covered them out. Then they sprinted over the hill. I couldn't see anyone else. Everyone alive and wounded had been taken out so I turned and went back over the hill."

"We reorganized the line on the same location that the attack had been launched from. The company and suffered 29 or 30 casualties during the attack. Six dead were left in the village."

LT Burton "The company pulled back over the hill to the east of the POW Camp on line while C Company deployed along the airstrip, while waiting on the airstrike."

CPT Paul R. Robinson (FR 64049, F-100 Pilot, 308th TAC Fighter Squadron, Tuy Hoa AFB) "We were on alert with our two F100's sitting on the end of the strip. My ship carried four Mark 82's (500 pound high drag bombs) and my wing man (CPT Robert E. Humphreys) carried 4 napalms (700 pounds). We both had 1600 rounds of 20mm. At 1330 hours, we scrambled on alert for action at Tuy Hoa with instructions to contact TCNTO 03, the Forward Air Controller."

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

"We held for ten or fifteen minutes over the area waiting for three birds (FLOC's) from the Bien Hoa AFB (3d TAC Fighter Wing). The FAC briefed us on the target and layout and we made a dry run from north to south at 500 knots at about 300 feet. Then we made three hot runs, hitting the pickle button (bomb release). The first pass I dropped two 500 pound bombs and one each on the next two passes. My wingman did the same with his napalm. Then we held high and dry."

"The birds from Bien Hoa arrived and the FAC reported troops running into the rice paddies so they dropped their bombs in the rice paddies next to the village. We then made 20mm strafing runs over the rice paddies with explosive 20mm cannons. One of the pilots said he saw about 20 (NVA) on the edge of the village and in the rice paddies. CPT Humphrey's said when he releases his first napalm he saw several people coming out of a building where his bomb was going. As we left, 3 more ships from Phu Cat came on station."

PFC Nguyen (NVA POW) "The airstrikes caused many casualties. You dropped a 1000 pound (500 pound) bomb almost in the middle of the HQ section and followed it 2 or 3 minutes by a fire bomb, followed by aircraft guns. I was wounded by the 1000 pound bomb. It killed political officer and the Battalion CO aide and I heard it wounded the Battalion CO. The fire bomb landed two beds away from me. The fire was hitting within inches of me and burned me on the arm and foot. The aircraft guns hit me in the back (20mm). I think most of the Battalion Staff was killed or wounded by the airstrikes. I just laid there until the Government troops found me."

At about 1530 D and C Company Commanders conducted an aerial recon of the village and were briefed on the method of attack. C Company was scheduled to attack from the northeast to the stream. The airstrikes came and C Company swung around to get in position. While moving south to get in position they received some fire from their flank. It was neutralized. They maneuvered up to their assault position and deployed on line. C/4-503d's 81mm mortars went into action and started placing effective fires on the village. D Company moved into position trying to stay off the gun target line. About 1630 hours, Dog Company received instructions to deploy into attack position. Their strength was now about 44 effectives. C Company started taking casualties once they were in position. CPT Jackson crawled forward to the original OP and was maneuvering the left and right flank up. Then word came from LTC Johnson to pull back for more air and artillery strikes. While CPT Jackson issued instructions the 81mm were still firing. A short round came in and hit Dog's left flank. The round hit between the right portion of the left flank and the right portion of the Company CP element that was just getting up to withdraw. Fifteen casualties were caused by the short round and Dog Company was rendered combat ineffective. Dog Company withdrew to a perimeter across the dirt road next to the airstrip and C Company remained in position dug in. The company set up a 360 degree perimeter for the night.

The ARVN Forces (1st and 2nd Bn 47th ARVN Regt) made an attack on the village but they started taking casualties and LTC Johnson had them withdraw and called in more airstrikes. SNOOPY and artillery illuminated and fired on the village all night. ARVN Forces remained in position to the south.

B Company was lifted into Tuy Hoa North at 0800 the next morning and elements of D Company, 16th Armor arrived. The plan was to conduct an assault on the village in armored personnel carriers. B Company occupied Dog Companies former position. The attack was to take place at 1000 hours with the APC's smashing the enemy's first line and the paratroopers to assault from them and sweep the village.

Before the attack could take place the 47th ARVN moved up and occupied the village against light opposition. B Company and C Company also swept the village and mopped the area.

PFC Turner (NVA POW) "The remains of the Battalion tried to escape in small groups thru the rice paddies to the west and back into the mountains."

CONFIDENTIAL

AVBE-SC/MHD

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Interview

"When the 47th AVN moved in I heard a lot of firing. I was afraid they'd shoot me before they realized I wasn't going to resist."

13. Results: The morning of 31 January, Dog Company mustered at an effective strength of 2 officers and 38 enlisted. They suffered 14 KIA (2 were attached personnel) and 44 WHA. NVA casualties were: 189 KIA (BC) and 31 POW's, 77 NVA KIA (BC) were credited to the 173d Airborne Brigade. A large number of small arms (AK-47's, SKS carbines) crew serve weapons and equipment were captured along with 2 82mm mortars. US equipment losses were: 12 M-16 rifles, 5 M-60 machine guns, 14 .45 caliber pistols, 1 90mm recoilless rifle, 2 watches, 2 compasses (M-2) and three sets of binoculars.

14. Analysis: The Battle of Tuy Hoa North was characterized by rapid reaction, aggressiveness, bravery and fire power. However on the minus side better and more rapid intelligence and perhaps a heavier and longer bombardment of CS would have been more successful. There were also additional weapons and units in the area which could have been used to advantage.

Battlefield intelligence leading to the initial assault by Dog Company at noon on the 30th had them engaging an enemy platoon when actually an enemy battalion minus those men lost in the attack on the artillery position had been diggin in since 0600 that morning. POW's/refuges from the village had come into Allied hands but no real estimate of the enemy's strength had been made.

The use of CS gas would have been more successful if it had been sub-stained for a longer period. The sea breeze carried it off along with the heat from the burning huts. Some NVA ran from the gas but most stayed and ate it since it quickly blew over. Some men carried CS baseball grenades on the assault but these proved more of a hinder than a help since most of the US troops pulled off their mask once in the village and the fresh CS hurt them more than the enemy. A sub-stained CS attack would have produced better results.

Another incident which hurt the assault was the way in which many troops left the assault to help carry the wounded to the rear. The wounded should be left to the medics. The withdrawal of six to twelve troops during the assault can have painful results; one or two wounded could cause most of a fire team to be withdrawn.

In preparing the village prior to the assault there were two twin 40mm selfpropelled cannons in the artillery position which could have been used to great effect if employed. Armored personnel carriers with their .50 caliber machine guns would also be highly effective but they were held until 31 January before it was decided to use them.

The use of air power and the personal bravery of the officers and NCO's of the men engaged was awe inspiring. From the Commanding General down the paratroopers conducted themselves fearlessly. The lack of accurate, speedy intelligence was the one major weakness. Attachment of a Vietnamese interpreter to US companies and quick action to access all battlefield intelligence to a central point would reduce this problem.

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SSG Robert J. Destatte (172d MI Det. IPW Team): "We came down to the airstrip to coordinate with ARVN subsector (located at Tuy Hoa north) on some POW's we heard they'd captured. As we drove to the airstrip we heard heavy small arms and mortar fire over the burning village (0900 hours). Most all was our fire going into the village. We could see troops on the dunes. Everybody was gone from the ARVN subsector. We about spent 15 minutes and decided to get out of everybody's way and returned to Sector (MACV at Tuy Hoa)."

"We stopped at the airstrip to see what was going on. Most of the fire was in-going. We drove up the road and saw National Police men crossing the road firing into the upper village. At first we thought they were trigger happy. Then we could hear the firing coming back. Then 1LT Edward H. Anthony said stop the jeep and take up defensive positions on each side of the road. We parked on the right side of the road. I'd just gotten across the road and laid down when I saw three people sneaking down an alley across the road. All three were wearing shorts and the front one had a scarf of camouflaged silk, all wore black shirts. The lead man was carrying a grease gun and I wasn't sure if they were regional force or bad guys. I didn't want to kill our own people. They were interested in the area towards the National Police. The lead man saw me from the corner of his eye and spun around towards me with his weapon. I took him under automatic fire. The lead man fired a burst with the grease gun and the other two took off running around the laundry up the alley. LT Anthony and LT Vincent someone stayed behind the jeep and covered the laundry. I moved about ten meters to the right behind a tree and waited."

"I saw a man poke his head around the corner of the laundry and jump back. I knew he'd spotted me and was going to throw a grenade. Then I heard the grenade clip a dry branch over my head. I knew it was near but not where so I squeezed down in the sand. It exploded 10 feet from me in the deep sand and exploded harmlessly only scaring the hell out of me. LT Anthony and LT Panzone moved across the road and took up positions 25 meters to my right. I waited for the NVA to follow up the grenade but they didn't come out so I cut across a couple of fences and got behind a lattice fence. A refugee came out from behind the laundry with bundles, looked both ways and crossed the street."

"I waited for a while, then LT Anthony told me to call across in Vietnamese for them to put their weapons down and surrender and they wouldn't get shot."

"Then I saw one man in black sneaking up the other side of the laundry between a pile of furniture. The one in the scarf moved out behind him in front of the next house. I had good concealment so I took careful aim and opened up on automatic. He fell and I turned my weapon on the other man and tried to fire on him thru the furniture. The man I hit moved back around the corner then they tried to cross an alley under LT Anthony's and LT Panzone's observation and they drove them back by fire several times."

"Then LT Anthony sent me down to the National Police and Regional Forces to see if we couldn't get some to come back and help us. I also told a civilian who was moving towards the airfield to notify the Regional Forces to come. I found Major Hung in charge and he said they'd had the same individuals under fire and the NVA had killed 1 National Policeman. He asked his CO for permission to move into the village to find them. Then 2 squads of Regional Forces Troops moved down from the airfield to help out - so that sewed it up."

"1LT Trime Ngoc Qui, from Vietnamese Sector Armor Branch, took a squad in and searched the area around the laundry and then broke in the laundry and conducted a room to room search. (Here the LT frisked his own men and made the boy that lived there check to make sure the ARVN troops had not stolen anything)"

"Then we stopped and visited Major Hung and he told us what they'd done. He said they captured 8 weapons, killed 2 and had 2 WIA trapped. They were preparing to move in on the upper village with combat police and Regional Forces. The 47th ARVN was to the left. The ARVN troopers seemed pretty well controlled and Major Hung forbid them to fire rifle grenades since they would endanger friendly troops. He left a blocking force and started conducting a house to house search of the upper village. Then we left."

Inclosure 1 to INC/ 5

73

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